Interview with Harold Martin

Donald Linky: My name is Don Linky. It is May 14, 2009. We're here at the Eagleton Institute of Politics on the campus of Rutgers University in New Brunswick . This is part of the series of video interviews that we've been conducting for the Brendan Byrne Archive of the Rutgers program on the governor. Today we're going to be talking to Harold Martin. Harold was a leader in the New Jersey Assembly during the administration of Governor Brendan Byrne on education reform, chairing the joint committee on reform of the thorough and efficient education program, and it has become a continuing issue not only from the 1970s but to the current day. Harold has been active in politics since the 1950s. He's also been very successful in the private sector in business and has been a leader in philanthropic causes in New Jersey, including in support of Rutgers University here in New Brunswick. We're going to be discussing the range of issues that Harold has seen over the course of his long political career in New Jersey and to talk a little bit about how the state has changed for better or worse. And we'll be happy to talk to Harold about his perspective on current day government and politics.

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Q: Harold, I wanted to first start with some thoughts that you have over your political career as to how politics and government in New Jersey has changed over your adult political life, both for better or for worse.

Harold Martin: Well Don, I hate to say it but I think that the political atmosphere in New Jersey has gone downhill. I think there's pretty general agreement amongst those of us who have served in New Jersey politics, whether it be on the local, county or state level, that tempers have gotten very short. And the give and take that used to be on a friendly basis has turned about 180 degrees. And that's a rather unpleasant situation, and I think that has to change before any real progress in solving problems of our governments, whether it be local, county or state, that's gotta change. There has to be a friendly rapport amongst those of us who are in government.

Q: You were born in West New York, then your family moved to Brooklyn when you were six years old?

Harold Martin: That's correct.

Q: What were your early childhood memories growing up? I suspect Brooklyn was the first thing you recall rather than the West New York days.

Harold Martin: Well, that's not quite true, Don. I guess I've been blessed with a very long memory. And I did have a rather interesting childhood. And just very briefly let me tell you that my parents operated a menswear store in West New York on the very, very best corner for business that ever existed. It used to be known as 16 th Street, and then sometime many years later they renumbered the streets in Hudson County I guess, at least in West New York. And it is now known as 60 th Street Bergenline Avenue .

As a matter of fact, I probably was born only a few blocks from where one of my colleagues in the legislature who you may recall, Joe LeFante, excuse me, not Joe LeFante, but Chris Jackman. I meant to say Chris Jackman. That's a problem that you get with old age. But any rate, my parents had a store there, which was a rather good-sized store. And we did a big business. And from my earliest days when I was only a tot, maybe two years old or so, since both parents were busy in the store as were my older brother and older sister, in the evenings instead of taking me up and putting me into bed because there'd be nobody up there to watch me, we lived right above the store, they would put me into a carton, which was filled with soft paper, the stuff that you take out of shirt boxes or short boxes or whatever, basically tissue paper. And that was my bed. And of course when the store closed, they would take me up and put me in my regular bed. And so when I became old enough, even at the age of maybe five years old, I was aware that we were selling merchandise, and I guess that stayed with me all my life. I basically have a salesman's approach to – activity in terms of socializing. I'm not afraid to meet people and so forth. But then at the age of six, maybe a little bit before that, my folks gave up the store, they lost the lease on the building, and we eventually had to relocate to Brooklyn. But in between my parents took an extended trip to Europe, that was 1924. And I had the good fortune to meet The Queen, whom you probably may not remember because before your time, Queen Mary,

the wife of King George V. And it happened at a fair, The British are always having fairs. I said fairs, not affairs, although they have those too. At any rate, for some reason or other, she was there and she patted me on my head so my parents told me. And I remember that. And then at the age of six, as you said, we moved to Brooklyn where they opened another men's store. And I was one of their prime salesmen at the age of 13 or 14 or whatever in between going to school.

Q: How did your family first come to this country?

Harold Martin: Well, my father was born on the Lower East Side . And I'm told that since his parents had very little money and they were immigrants themselves, the family always moved about once a month to avoid paying rent. And that was an unfortunate situation but one that many, many families experienced in that period. My mother was born in Romania, and since I was so young at the time, <laughter> hearing stories about her childhood, it meant really very little to me. And unfortunately she died at a fairly—- that might be considered a young age today. I know very little about her parents or her family.

Q: What's your father's country of origin?

Harold Martin: My father's side—his father came from an area that was in contention over the years, many years, between Russia and Poland. Whether he was Polish or Russian, I really don't know. But I do know from hearsay that he came to this country to avoid serving in the Russian army. And that was a common thing for many, many Jewish people.

Q: Talk about these early years in Brooklyn.

Harold Martin: Sure. My earliest recollection, I guess I was—- well, it was 1927 because—- and I was then nine years old, I recall very distinctly a parade that took place, we were on a busy thoroughfare, 86 th Street, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, which is a very busy, busy commercial area. And of course in those days there were very few automobiles. So it was almost like sort of the suburban towns here, the smaller suburban towns. And I remember very distinctly standing out on the street in the gutter waiting for Lindbergh, Charles Lindbergh to come by in a limousine sitting up on a rear of a open car. And I was within I guess the distance from here to the table or to you to Charles Lindbergh. And that was a very vivid experience. And my—- I really started in school in Brooklyn, I was only what, 19-- we moved there in 1925, so I was seven years old. But apparently my teachers thought so well of me that I skipped twice in elementary school. And so I got out of—- I gradated high school when I was only 17 instead of 18.

Q: Did your parents stress education as the way up?

Harold Martin: No, my parents, neither of them, my father had no more than a grade school education. He happened to be quite talented as a haberdasher. And my mother had no more than a grade school education. And of course she had to learn English when she came here. And their working hours, which were from early morn to about 12 o'clock at night, were taken to making a living operating the store. So that neither one of them talked in terms of education. But I do know that they were delighted, absolutely ecstatic, if I can use that term, when they learned that I was skipping a couple of classes in school.

Q: Was the business successful enough at that time that you thought of going on to college?

Harold Martin: Oh yes, yes. We had a very, very good business, we had no competition. And we had a lot of—- don't forget, this was a couple years before the crash. We had a lot of Wall Street traders and brokers and executives who lived in Bay Ridge because that was considered a very desirable place for people in Wall Street to live. And so we did a very big business. And we had some very important people, mainly ship captains, we had a lot of Norwegian, Swedish, Irish ship captains who, when they came off the ship, wanted clothing. And they were our customers.

Q: Was the ethnic mix in the neighborhood mostly Eastern European, mostly Jewish or more mixed?

Harold Martin: Oh no, it wasn't Jewish by any means. Because I encountered some anti-Semitism. Not on a big scale, minor, but irritating, and-- you know? It was principally Norwegian and Swedish, then Irish, German and Italian. And the trades people, the people in commerce were—- some of them were Jews. But we had a nice mix. People were by and large very friendly, very welcoming. And it was a nice place to live. And Coney Island was only about three or four miles away. So I used to ride my bicycle on occasion to Coney Island to get a Nathan's hot dog and maybe get a ride on the dodging cars or the Ferris wheel or to go swimming.

Q: You mentioned Lindbergh, did he become a hero?

Harold Martin: Well, that's a good question. You raise a very good question. At that time he was my hero. When I was in college and I saw him making eyes at Hitler, that changed my impression of him. And I took him for what he was- was pro-Nazi.

Q: In this sort of turbulent time, moving into the 20s and 30s, did you have political heroes or did you think even about politics at that time?

Harold Martin: As I search back, 'cause it's quite a few years now, I used to do a lot of reading. From my earliest days, when business was slow, when I wasn't needed to put stock away or to stock the shelves, I would sit in the back of the store and read The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, which no longer exists as you know, The World Telegram, which later became The World Telegram and Sun. And I would read voraciously. There was a murder case in New Jersey, Charles Lindbergh's son was murdered. And I read that voraciously and followed the trial, etcetera. But in terms of politics, I don't believe that I really got interested until-- there was a governor, Alfred E. Smith was governor of New York State. And somehow or other he captured my imagination because of his very humble beginnings as a newspaper deliverer. And I thought it was remarkable that anybody who started out as a paperboy so to speak could rise up through the ranks and get the support of Tammany Hall. And I began to read about Tammany Hall. And I thought that any man who could face up to Tammany Hall and be governor in his own right was a rather interesting person to sort of set up as an idol. And so I became quite interested. And as luck would have it, my sister who became one of the first lawyers to pass the Bar, the first students to pass the Law Bar, she went to New Jersey Law School, which is now Rutgers, I thought she might have even been, I don't know, she doesn't know, she might have even be Dick Hughes' or Governor Hughes' classmate, but I'm not sure of that. At any rate, she went to work for Al Smith Jr. as a clerk in his law firm. So it's an interesting, you know, juxtaposition.

Q: Any other siblings?

Harold Martin: Yes, my brother is five years older than me. And he's a graduate engineer, graduated The University of Missouri 1935 and—- '34, excuse me. And since I went out with my father and mother to pick him up at the end of the school year, I fell in love with The University of Missouri, which isn't hard to do, beautiful campus. And since I had no other ideas as to where I wanted to go to college, I just followed in his footsteps. And my sister is 10 years older than I am, she's just turned 96. Excuse me, my brother has turned 96, my sister has turned 101.

Q: Good genetic pool.

Harold Martin: So longevity runs in the family.

Q: What other memories do you have of childhood, how about the Dodgers in Ebbets Field?

Harold Martin: Oh yes, yes <laughter>. Glad you raised that. When I read the newspapers, as I told you before, I was inclined to try to guess, by doing a little math of course, what the battering averages were going to be tomorrow if so-and-so, Pee Wee Reese or Hack, I forgot his first name, Stan Hack, who later became a Cub, or the Waner boys, Paul and I forgot his brother's name.

Q: Snuffy?

Harold Martin: I don't recall. At any rate, the Waner brothers. I tried to figure out what their—- either the batting averages or their earned run averages were just by, you know, long division. It was one of my quirks <laughter>.

Q: You later showed interest in economics. Did you always have this sort of number-crunching fascination?

Harold Martin: Yeah, I guess so, I was always geared to trying to figure out whether a stock was a good buy or not. I did that when I was I guess 14 or 15, 16 years old. I didn't wind up buying any stock until I graduated—- see, it was September 1 st of 1939 when Hitler moved across the border. I said this is a good time to buy some stock. So I bought some Bethlehem Steel, not much, just a few shares, and I bought some Curtiss-Wright aircraft and I bought Cuban American Sugar. And I made some money on all three of them, but that was only 12 years later <laughter>.

Q: What courses did you take in Missouri?

Harold Martin: Well, I took the usual, you know, I took English Composition I guess it was, I took the beginner's course in Botany or Biology. Yeah, Botany and Biology I guess. At any rate I took French. I had already had four years of French in high school and I'd had four years of Spanish in high school.

Q: New Utrecht High School?

Harold Martin: New Utrecht, yes, which is Dutch name and of course Brooklyn was pretty much founded by the Dutch. And I graduated not at the top of my class in high school, but I guess I was a B+ student. At any rate, I had a good education in New Utrecht. It was a school of 5,000 students in three buildings. There was a beginner's building, which you went to for one year, another building which you went to for another year, and then you went to the main building for two years. And they had some very good teachers and I was a good student. And when I was in college-- you asked me about Missouri, I took English, French, Advanced French and Biology, Botany and a course in Political Science. And the professor in Political Science had aspirations to be a politician. And I understand, not while I was there, but a few years after I left, he ran for Congress. Now, whether he made it or not I really can't say. But he inspired me to follow the political line. And I finished my year at Missouri. Toward the end of the year a lot of students got the flu, and I was no exception. So when I came home, the doctor advised me to find a dryer climate than the Missouri valley, which as you know is quite damp, rainy. So I had to find another school. And I looked at schools ranging from New Mexico, Oregon, Arizona, California, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, basically looking at temperatures and climates. And I decided "If I'm going to find a dry climate, nothing like Arizona." So I applied there and was accepted. And just as a sidelight, when my father knew I was going to go Arizona, he said "You know, there's a good deal I saw in the newspaper." He used to read The Herald Tribune. And on the inside page of the first page, there's a little column. And it had specials sort of. It was for 85 dollars you could take a ship, a cruise from New York to Galveston, Texas. And from Galveston you would take a electrified trolley up to, not to Houston, excuse me, from Corpus Christi up to Galveston. And there you would take The Southern Pacific Rail Line to Arizona. All for 85 dollars. Well, those were Depression days, so I took it. And it was the most wonderful experience of my life.

Q: Had you ever been to Arizona before enrolling at The University of Arizona?

Harold Martin: No, no, none of my family had been. I just got up and went.

Q: What was Tucson like in those days? Probably a wild and wooly place.

Harold Martin: That's a very good description. When I got off the train in Tucson , I thought I was in heaven. I was used to big buildings in New York , here there were no big buildings. You were lucky if you saw a two-story building. And the two-story buildings were down in the center of town, which was only a few blocks from the rail station. I looked around and I saw four mountains around the town, it's ringed by four ranges. And I thought I had reached heaven.

Q: How about adjusting to the heat and the new environment, it's very different for a Brooklyn boy?

Harold Martin: Yeah, except Don, you must realize that I went there at the beginning of September, I guess it was late August. And yes, it was hot, when I got off the train, yes, it was pretty darn hot. But the humidity in those days—- it's different now because now they grow grass. But when I got off the train it was nothing but sand and cactus. And it was very dry. And you didn't feel the heat the way you do here in the east. And then of course the winter was rather mild except for the first snow storm that some of my student friends from Arizona had seen because it was the first time it snowed in 25 years in January of '36.

Q: As you get to start college, you also get a job in your old family business of men's clothing, right?

Harold Martin: Yes, that's correct. It was a small department store. I guess it probably had no more than maybe, if I had to judge, maybe 1400 square feet, and small compared to what we have up here in these days. But it was a two story building, and the boss who was of Mexican heritage, Alex Jacome, spelled J-A-C-O-M-E. He was a Harvard graduate, and when I told him my parents had operated a menswear store, he hired me on the spot, because Christmas season makes up a great deal of the revenue for any retail shop. And he put me into the menswear department. This was over the Christmas holidays. And I had a rather interesting experience you might be interested in hearing. It was I guess in the late afternoon, maybe 3:30 , four o'clock or thereabouts. And I was busy taking care of a customer, waiting on a customer. And I had to get some shirts out of—- off the shelf that were in a box. Because what was in the showcase apparently didn't meet the customer's needs. And as I looked around, I was only maybe not quite 18 at the time, I was energetic, and I whipped around with the box. And I bumped into a gentleman who apparently had a couple of canes, and I knocked him down. Well I was beside myself. And the boss saw this, Mr. Jacome came running down off the balcony and he helped the gentleman up as I did, and I didn't know who it was. And he apologized to the gentleman and I apologized to him, and apparently he wasn't hurt, just shaken up. Well, to make a long story short, after he left the store, maybe a half hour later, the boss came over to me and he said "Do you know who that was?" I said "I have no idea." He says "That was John "Black Jack" Pershing" [right] , the general who commanded the American forces in Europe. Well I almost fell off my feet because he was one of my heroes <laughter>.

Q: He also had a New Jersey connection, didn't he?

Harold Martin: Yes, with the military, you're right. We moved into—- as you know, I served in World War II. And after we were married, Reba and I were married, we moved into a small town in Bergen County, Creskill, it's only one square mile. And – it used to be a camp, it was Camp Merritt in World War II. It was basically a staging area before men were sent overseas or when they returned as a point of debarkation. And as luck would have it, after I became Freeholder, well that's another story, but I just want to mention it here, it was my job since Creskill was my town, the Board of Freeholders decided that I would be the one to make the Memorial Day speech at the monument. We have a monument right between the town of Dumont and the town of Creskill . But the Camp Merritt covered both towns or the major part of both towns. And the gentleman who was in charge of that camp during part of his army career was none other than John J. Pershing.

Q: Whom you knocked over in Tucson .

Harold Martin: Yeah, he's the guy that I knocked down in Tucson , Arizona . And his picture, in case you're interested, in case you want to take a photograph of it, you can have your photographer go up and take a still picture of John J. Pershing in his military uniform. It hangs on the left wall as you go into the council chambers, you can see it there.

Q: Any other memories of Arizona ?

Harold Martin: Oh yeah, yeah sure. <laughter> Memories. Where else would a New York boy or New Jersey boy get to ride horses out on the desert amongst the cactus and where else would <laughter> would a New York boy learn to jump a horse <laughter> abut that high, which is about what, three feet, three and a half feet. If you've

never done that, I suggest you have your heart checked first to make sure it <laughter> would stand the thrill <laughter>.

Q: Now you graduate from The University of Arizona—

Harold Martin: Yes—- no, no, I didn't graduate from Arizona . I spent my sophomore year there.

Q: That's right. And then you come east back—

Harold Martin: I came home east—- came back east at the end of the school year, had an operation on my nose. And after the operation I had a very serious strep infection that went from my nose into my ears. And it almost killed me, I was in bed for oh, more than a month, maybe six weeks or thereabouts. And I had to learn to walk all over again. 'Cause that was in the days as you know, before the wonder drugs. So I ran 106 fever for, I don't know, two, three, four days or whatever. And just by luck, the pus in the ear broke through the canal, it was what is known as a natural – operation so to speak. They used to cut—- in order to relieve that kind of a situation, they used to cut into your mastoid. But it was either break through or I was through. I would have died.

Q: So after your health is restored, you apply to other universities, including Rutgers ?

Harold Martin: Yes. Yeah. I applied to maybe—- I don't recall how many, but it was around 10 I guess, I don't know. Because in those days it didn't cost you anything to apply to a college. And incidentally I might mention, it might be of interest to you, when I went to the University of Missouri it cost me 125 dollars. 100 dollars out-of-state fee and 25 dollars tuition. It wasn't really tuition. It was for athletic facilities uses. And the same thing was true of the University of Arizona . So my only expenses were living expenses, which were very cheap in those days. I guess they granted 35, 40 dollars a month, room and board, room and board. Course if you don't mind eating chili con carne six days a week, you know? But you asked me the question, I applied to the University of Maine . I applied to the University of Wisconsin . I applied to the University of Illinois in Urbana . I applied to – Penn State . And I applied to Princeton . Princeton accepted me, which was unusual.

Q: Unusual why?

Harold Martin: Well, it was unusual for one reason, that they didn't take too many Jewish students, if any. But I may have fooled them because on the application where it said religion I just left it blank. And they may not have known. But I went down to Princeton and I toured the campus. And when I saw the reading club and saw who the students were reading there, I said this is out of my class. And I decided I'd go to Rutgers . So I enrolled here.

Q: What was Rutgers like in those days?

Harold Martin: That's a good question. In the first place, the only thing that I knew of Rutgers in those days was the campus that existed from Queens campus all the way up to River Road near where the John Lynch Bridge is, College Avenue- both sides of College Avenue, and as a matter of fact I lived on Richardson Street . I rented a room in a rooming house, #6 Richardson Street . I'll never forget that. And there were three other students who also rented rooms there and all I knew of Rutgers was from #6 Richardson Street to the new-- It was new in those days. Matter of fact, it had just been built, which was just a block from where I lived, and of course Busch campus and Queens- the old Queens campus, and Winants Hall was where we bought our books. And incidentally, Wyman's Hall was nothing like what you know it. This is a new brick building. In my day it was a fire trap. It was a wooden, rickety-- When you walked up the steps you were not sure whether the steps would hold you. They creaked and it was a real fire trap and everybody knew it but they couldn't close it down. They needed it.

Q: Any particular courses or professors that you really took a liking to at—

Harold Martin: Oh, yeah, sure. You're raising a good question. I have a basis for comparison because I went to the U of M and the U of A. Right? And so I had good professors at both places. The U of A in Arizona had professors

who like me went out there for health reasons, for climate reasons, and a lot of those professors came from the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois, the University of Chicago. They were good professors, real good, so I had no qualms about that, and the University of Missouri they were pretty good nothing to rave- write home about, but at Rutgers they were superb because a lot of the professors had to moonlight in order to survive. Professors didn't make very much in those days. They might have gotten 2500, 2800, maybe even $3000, and that wasn't much to live on especially if you had--as one of my professors had--had a child who had severe disabilities and it was a real problem for him. And he was one of my best professors and his name was Burns. He taught international law and real property. I had John J. George who I understand ran for Congress after I left in 1941, somewhere around '43 or '44. I don't know when it was. He ran for Congress. I don't know whether he made it or not- didn't make it. At any rate, he was real good too. He taught constitutional law, and I had another professor by the name of Burns who was absolutely superb. He taught history, European history from 1815 to current, and he was marvelous, no notes. He had the notes but he had them behind his back, three by five cards, and I think- in all the time I saw him I think maybe he looked at them three times, four times, had a fantastic memory, really fantastic, but the outstanding-- And then I had Professor Gideonse, whose brother was the president of Brooklyn College. Harry Gideonse was the president of Brookyn College in the late forties, early fifties.

Q: Do you remember how you spell that?

Harold Martin: G-i-d-e-o-n-s-e, Gideonse, Dutch name, and both of them I think were refugees. Max Gideonse, my professor in international economics, very good, a very good man, but the outstanding one was Arthur Burns [below] who became the chairman of the Federal Reserve system. Arthur was a refugee from Austria and a very unique individual, jet-black hair combed back, and he used to have a pipe. And our classroom was no bigger than this room. The blackboard was here. He propped his chair up. He used to do this and lean up against the blackboard, and there were times when it was touch and go as to whether he would—

Q: Fall over?

Harold Martin: Slip, yeah, and he would take his pipe and take the reamer and ream and ream and ream and think about what some of the great economists had to say on page 652 in their book and look up at the ceiling as though the words were up there. <laughs> At any rate, he would then proceed to fill his pipe and tamp it down for another ten minutes and then in those days you could smoke. He lit up his pipe and he snickers out of the room, the classroom, all the time giving us his version of Marshall's Principles of Economics or John Maynard Keynes or some of the other-, Burke or whatever. Who knows?

Q: Of course, you'd later work at the Federal Reserve.

Harold Martin: Yeah. That—

Q: Was that the first time you got an interest in what they did?

Harold Martin: Yeah. Yeah, because he opened my eyes as to how the economic and financial system worked in this country. Oh, I had one other professor too who should- well, two others who should be mentioned: Dr. Agger, Eugene Agger, a slight, portly sort of gentleman with blondish-white hair who used to use a green shade, not a complete hat but just a shade- eye shade, and he would sit in his office next to Floyd Hall. That's a building. I presume it's still there, a two-story or three-story building, and he was chairman of the Department of Economics in those days, a man about- maybe sixtyish or so. Somehow or other he and I our chemistry jelled and he would wait for me. He taught a class right after lunch at one o'clock and I would come out of the dorm, Floyd Hall. I had moved in to- on to the campus in my junior year- senior year--excuse me--and I would pick him up and we'd walk over to class and he would talk about all sorts of things. And incidentally, his son-in-law-- Just as a side light, his daughter, Carol I think was her name, she married a guy who became a Supreme Court justice and that was Abe Fortas whom Johnson appointed to the Court. And there was one other professor that I should mention: A small man who taught at Columbia as did Arthur Burns. Both of them moonlighted. They moonlighted at Rutgers ; they taught at Columbia . <laughs> At any rate, the professor that I'm about to tell you- and I'm trying- searching my

memory for his name-- At the moment I'm having a senior moment, <laughs> but at any rate he had polio. He had a terrible, terrible time walking but he was real good and I learned finance. He was the professor of finance and he went in to the Federal Reserve operations at greater length, and of course that got me interested too, but my getting in to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York had nothing other than being on my resume because that didn't occur until after I got out of the army.

Q: Let's talk about that. You're in college during World War II, at least the beginning, and then you go in to the army. What was the atmosphere at Rutgers before you go in to the army?

Harold Martin: Oh, yeah. It was a very leisurely place, a very friendly place. It was all male as you know though the coeds didn't start coming in until after I left unfortunately, but of course there were plenty of coeds over on Douglass campus and it's only a mile and a quarter or so to walk. We didn't have cars in those days; we walked. At any rate, it was a very leisurely place but as it became evident that there was going to be a war, though I'm talking now in terms of 1938, we spent a good deal of time or at least I did in the evenings with the radio going listening to Edward R. Murrow, Charles Collingwood, Shirer and others discussing the approach of the- what was coming in '39 and '40. And so there was that apprehension. And I must mention one other thing. You asked me about the school. Rutgers in those days didn't have much of a football team. Our big games were Princeton and Brown and Penn State and maybe Temple . At any rate, I saw the games on a field, just a field with some stands that were where the big, red building on Bishop campus is, the one that they use for dining hall and banquets or whatever. That was a football field. And then at the end of '38 they moved across the river to the stadium where I had the pleasure of seeing Rutgers defeat Princeton for the first time in I don't know how many years. And of course the town and the Rutgers students went wild. They marched through town, oh, just went wild, but I must mention-- There was something else on my mind that I wanted to tell you. Yes. We had a great--and I can't emphasize it enough--debating program. I can't remember the name of the professor but he was a student of debating. He was a public relations type of guy and he sent us out-- He arranged-- And it was quite a chore. He arranged for five teams--I think there were five teams of four students each--to go on a tour at spring break, and so I and three other students, one of whom owned a car-- His father was the athletic director here. I think his last name was Talbot but I'm not sure. At any rate, the four of us started out. We went down to-- We went out to Lehigh and--let's see--Lehigh and Lafayette, debated them. Then we went down to Temple , debated them, and in each case wherever we went the host team provided us with lodging and food and maybe even entertainment.

Q: What sparked your interest in debate?

Harold Martin: I'm sorry.

Q: What sparked your interest in debate?

Harold Martin: Well, it was part of the public speaking class.

Q: So it was almost required.

Harold Martin: Yeah. It was an— Not everybody who was in public speaking went on the tours. I was fortunate and it was quite an experience. We went to Maryland , debated UOM. We went down to Georgetown and we went out to West Virginia . We went through Pennsylvania , Susquehanna I think we debated. We went out as far as Cincinnati, debated University of Cincinnati , and then we went up to Cleveland and then we returned to New Jersey . So inside of a week we covered a lot of territory and it was a marvelous experience, and the interesting thing, Don, is that in some cases our opponents could not believe- they couldn't believe that we knew so much about the subject. And the basic question at that point was shall the United States help Great Britain and France by supplying them with arms? In some cases we took the positive; in some cases we took the negative. It was a flip of the coin and we had to be prepared at a moment's notice to take either side, and we were complimented at a couple of places. The professor who was in charge of his students-- In one case he came over to me and he says, "Harold"-- He says, "Where did you learn to do this?" He just couldn't believe. So it-- Well, and all it indicated was that we had something that they didn't have.

Q: Which side of the question did you personally outside your debate role fall under?

Harold Martin: Oh, obviously I was for the-- Or I say "obviously." <laughs> You may not know so it may not be that obvious, but I was for- in- on the for- pro side and principally because my professors were pro and they- the arguments were overwhelming that we either had to stop that madman, Hitler- or I should say men, and Mussolini. You didn't hear too much about Japan . That didn't come until later on but it was obvious that there was a mad- a couple of madmen and they had to be stopped, and let me- while I'm on that if I may-- In those days--I don't know whether they do it today but--we had what is known as a convocation where a prominent speaker on a national level would be invited to speak. We had two very prominent ones: Wendell Willkie, the chairman of Commonwealth and Southern Utility who ran for President on the Republican ticket, but he was being challenged at that time by Senator Robert Taft, the son of Howard- President Howard Taft, and both of them came to the campus. Willkie spoke in the- what was then the new gym and he had--oh, I don't know--maybe all of the classes. We might have had 1400 students in the auditorium- in the gym. When Taft came they had him speak in Kirkpatrick Chapel, which is smaller as well as you know, and I think it was only our senior class that attended. You were required to come and Taft made the anti argument: Stay out of it, it's none of our business, let them fight it out and we'll be stronger when it's all over, and all that. Well, that bothered me and I got up at the end of his talk and I challenged his thesis and I- with all due respect, Senator Taft, I disagree with you on this, that and the other basis, and I'd like to get your answer to my thesis. And I was the only one that got up and challenged him. <laughs>

Q: At this point had President Roosevelt become a political hero of yours?

Harold Martin: Only to some extent. I was totally in agreement because I saw the evidence of it with his program to rejuvenate the economy. He had WPA, he had TVA, he had PWA, he had any number of other programs, and I was a recipient. When I went to the University of Arizona if it had not been for WPA they wouldn't have had six or seven new buildings that I was privileged to use. All they had before that was Old Main, which was a building that went back to the 1860s or '70s or whatever, and a few other old brick buildings; that's all. So his program really put U of A on the map and I had to agree with his- with what he was doing. As far as his international program is concerned, one of my professors, the one I spoke- the name I couldn't think of before, Sundelson, Wilner Sundelson. He was a polio victim, a very bright guy, very bright, and good teacher and he asked me would I mind lending my name to a committee to get- to try to get the President to supply arms to Britain and France . I forget what he called it, the committee to help our allies by supplying-- lend, lease. That's right. And so I said yes and-- I don't know. A couple of stories were written up in the New Brunswick Home News, but that's about it.

Q: In 1943, you leave college and enlist in the army. Is that correct?

Harold Martin: I didn't leave. I went to work-- That was in '41. I left here in '41 not completing my thesis. I had all my coursework done for my master's but in '41 when I finished I applied- took some exams- federal exams for jobs, and I had an offer from the- I forget what department, Interior, one of the departments. It was for a clerk and they offered me $1400 or something like that and I said, "This is ridiculous. I can't go to live in Washington and- for 1400 bucks. It's ridiculous." Well, my brother was working up in a war plant in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and he says, "Look. You don't have a job yet. Come up for the summer. It's-- Cape Cod is nice for the summer. Come up here and work. When you find something that you like just take it." So I went up there and I was working only about a month or so. I think it was July. I saw an ad in the newspaper for a sailboat and it sounded interesting and I liked the idea of sailing. I'd never sailed and I couldn't swim worth a darn, but I had an idea I'd like to learn so at any rate I answered the ad. It was a young man, a college student, an engineering student from Lehigh University , whose father happened to be the commander of the fort in New Bedford , Fort Rodman . He had this brand-new boat that he built with I guess government money. <laughs> He had all the best materials. It was about an 18-foot sailboat, not a class boat, just an ordinary-- You'd think of it as a rowboat other than- a large rowboat with a keel- a steel keel, on it but it looked beautiful. He had just painted it and it was gorgeous and it had eight- 165 square feet of pima cotton sail. I said, "How much do you want for it?" He said, "How about $150?" I took out a deposit of $25 and I said, "Write out <laughs> a bill of sale for me and I'll pick the boat up Saturday when I am not working." <laughs> Sure enough, my brother and I went back Saturday. He put the boat in the water and inside of about an hour he showed us both how to hold a tiller and sail the boat, <laughs> and that's how I learned to sail. The only

problem was it had no motor on it and as you know <laughs> when you get becalmed you could sit there and fry. <laughs> There's a tail to this story that you may be interested in. Somewhere maybe a couple of months later I saw an ad for an outboard motor and I said to my brother, "That's what we need; we need a motor for the boat in case we're becalmed." So we went and looked at the motor. It was a 75-horsepower outboard. I forget the name of it, but at any rate I bought it--I don't know; 30 bucks, whatever--and we put it- we cleaned it up, put it on the boat, but we never could get this thing to run. Apparently, the previous owner I guess didn't tell us that he had dropped it in the salt water 'cause that's the only thing I can think of as to why it wouldn't work. We put a new sparkplug in it. It just would not kick over and if you ever tried to start a- an outboard motor you could break your arm. At any rate, I never used- I never- we never used the motor, and then right after that- not- in early of- early '43, February or March, I was offered a job as a reporter on a New Bedford-- I forget the name of the paper but a New Bedford paper, but they offered me--I don't know---$30 a week or something like that and I said, "No, not for me." I quit my job because even though I was making overtime-- Incidentally, I started that job in '41 for the minimum wage, 25 cents an hour, counting rivets and paper tubes which are used in making condensers, capacitors, for the electronics equipment used in World War II and as luck would have it I finally wrote- wound up making 40 cents an hour and doing overtime. And so my biggest check I think might have been $65 a week or something like that so I quit the job. I had a good deferment. I really didn't have to quit but I wanted to get in to the service so I quit and I was drafted in March of- March or April of '43, and just as I was drafted I had taken an exam in the intervening period for the State Department. They offered me a job but I was already summoned to report for duty.

Q: Given your prior health problems, did you have any issues about getting in to the army or did they take you—

Harold Martin: Yeah. I had-- My eyesight is-- I'm short—

Q: Nearsighted.

Harold Martin: --nearsighted so that I couldn't get in to the air force. I wanted to get in to the navy but they rejected me on eyes and of course the army drafted me so I went in to the service.

Q: Of course, the story you just told about the outboard motor has some relevance to your military career, doesn't it?

Harold Martin: Oh, very much so. Having served in the army, I know how they operate and they have what is known as a MOS, military occupational specialty. In those days it was a card. Of course, nowadays with computers things are different but in those days when you were drafted a corporal or a sergeant would interview you and fill out this big tan card, a big card. He asked me a whole host of questions: Education, my interests, etc., etc., etc., health question and all that. Came the point where he asked me what my hobbies were. I told him fishing, sailing and I don't know what else and he put it down and he said, "Did you have a motor on the boat?" I said, "Yes." He never asked me whether I operated the motor. Well, a couple days later after we got all our shots and our equipment and all of that stuff I'm on a train with the curtains drawn because of wartime secrecy problems and I don't know where I'm headed. And the next day the curtains go up. It's broad daylight and where am I? I'm back up in Massachusetts only about a half an hour from where I'd been living and get off the train and they put us on a bus. Well, they fed us first, put us on the bus and they took us to Camp Edwards, Massachusetts , and my title was motorboat operator in the amphibian engineers fourth special brigade.

Q: It should have been sailing boat operator.

Harold Martin: Yeah. Now I don't know how much you know about the amphibian engineers but their job is to bring the troops and supplies onto hostile beaches, and that's what I was trained to do believe it or not.

Q: Notably, obviously the D-Day landing was probably the most—

Harold Martin: Well, as we were being trained the colonel in charge of the brigade kept telling us, "Men, it will not be many moons before you have to use the skills that we're teaching you so you better damn well learn what we're

showing you here." Well, somehow they decided they needed somebody to tell the troops why they're fighting because a lot of the people that were being drafted at that point were young fellows 18, 19, 20 years of old- of age. Don't forget at that point in '43 I was 25. I was considered an old man believe it or not, and so they wanted to teach the men why they're fighting, and there was a program that had just been started called the Why We Fight Series and it was being made in Long Island City in a filming studio. And in the army my MOS, military occupational specialty, showed that I had had a lot of history and political science and languages, and so my card was one of three cards that were on the desk of this lieutenant in personnel. And he called me in and he said, "Martin-- Private Martin—" He says, "I've got your card here on the top." He said, "I want to interview you." He asked me a whole host of questions and he said, "You've got the job. I'm not even going to interview the others." I went back to-- They put me in to headquarters. Don't forget up until that point I was a dogface, a grunt, just a private. The only higher officer I had seen in terms of day-to-day activity was a corporal or a sergeant. They switched me to headquarters and the next thing I knew the colonel calls me in to his office and I'm sitting there like I'm sitting with you, and he said, "Private Martin—" He says, "I see here that you all went to the University of Missouri." When he said " Missouri " I knew that he was a Missourian and sure enough he graduated from the University of Missouri <laughs> a few years before me, <laughs> and he put me at my ease and he says, "Look." He says, "I'm giving you an assignment. I'm giving you a weekend pass and three additional days. I want you to come back here at the end of your pass, prepare to tell the troops why they're fighting," and that's what I did. I wrote- went to the New York Public Library when I got home. I wrote up a story as to why we were in this war or going to be in the war, and we put it up on a huge board 24 foot wide by about- well, as high as this ceiling with maps of all the continents with lights, London, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Rome, etc., etc., etc. And as I- my writings were broken down into parts, roles, there were three or four of us who read different segments, and we were trying to tell the troops why they-- There was only one problem. In basic training they run you ragged and so at ten o'clock or 10:30 or eleven in the morning when you're there assembled to hear why you're fighting they're drifting off to sleep.

Q: Why don't we continue with the rest of your army career—

Harold Martin: All right.

Q: --coming out? You eventually become a second lieutenant. Right?

Harold Martin: Right.

Q: What were your other experiences? You went to officers candidate school.

Harold Martin: Yes. What happened, Don, along about late September or early October they were getting ready to ship us overseas from Camp Edwards . Since I had been transferred out of basic training, I had already learned to operate LCPs, LCPRs, LSTs, LCMs, the biggest ships, the ones that carry tanks, the ones that carry trucks and all of that sort of thing. They had moved me in to headquarters so I was no longer doing boat duty, and it was late September or early October they put me in to cadre. Cadre is training personnel and they shipped me down to Florida as cadre to train new troops to do boats duty, but when I got down to Florida the lieutenant that was my superior said, "Harold Martin—" He says, "You are going to OCS," and so he wrote up a recommendation for me and it was accepted and I was sent to New Orleans on the airbase which had a unit of the transportation corps, which was really what I was basically in, transportation, moving troops and supplies. And so I went through OCS there and of course they give you a broad training that applies all over, but when I finished OCS four of us were called out of line when we were given our commissions. And the four of us had the same things in common, multiple languages, history background, political science background, international relations background, and so they sent us to counterintelligence school up at Baltimore , Maryland . And so I went through the counterintelligence course and became a counterintelligence officer second lieutenant and that's it.

Q: I wanted to backtrack a little bit. We talked briefly about the D-Day invasion and the work you were doing then in preparing for amphibious landing. What were your thoughts on D-Day? Was that something that you said, "Well, I had a role in that even though I wasn't there."?

Harold Martin: Yeah. I had mixed feelings. I in a way wanted to get over there 'cause that's where the action was but the question is over where? I had my heart set on-- <inaudible>

Donald Linky: Harold, before our break you were talking about your interest in being sent abroad to fight in Europe, but that wasn't necessarily your choice. Why don't we pick it up at that point?

Harold Martin: All right, fine. You want me to elaborate on that, yeah. I, at the end of '46, I was over 28 and I was wondering what the rest of my life was going to be like because we had just come through a war period and there were going to be millions of men just like myself who were going to be looking for jobs. I had no vocation, so to speak. I was not a technical man, and my college aspirations were to get into the diplomatic corps, and I kind of figured at that stage of my life I'm not going to really make any progress in getting into the diplomatic corps or maybe even government. And my thoughts were that if I wanted to get married and raise a family I'd have to make some money, and the question was how to do it. So having decided that I wouldn't continue my army career, which I could have done as I mentioned earlier, having turned down the opportunity to go to Germany and work in military government, which was what I was offered, I decided that I'd have to go to work. And so I took a very temporary job in the latter part of '46 after I'd severed my Army connection, and it was just a temporary thing for the, I think it was the Labor Department doing a survey of housing in the five boroughs of New York. That lasted a month and it was really of no consequence to me personally because it had no future. What to do next was the question. I decided then that I would go back to Rutgers and get my thesis finished and get a masters degree, because all the indications were that you couldn't get very far without a secondary degree. My BA meant very little, and even a masters degree was beginning to mean very little. So I went back t Rutgers. I finished my thesis, got my masters degree in '47 and then the question was what to do. So I went down to Wall Street and I walked into an employment agency, and they said they had an opening at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, would I be interested. I said, "Sure." Well, within minutes they'd made a call and I was over at the Federal Reserve 33 Liberty Street being interviewed, and I was hired as Research Economic Assistant in the Domestic Research Department. At that period of time they had two research departments, domestic and foreign. I worked in the domestic department for about a year or more, and basically I was preparing reports on business conditions in New York City and the Metropolitan area which consisted of part of Connecticut and part of New Jersey, northern New Jersey. That was

known as a statistical area meaning that you dealt with statistics from that proscribed area. And I did that for, as I say, about a year, a year and a quarter.Then they needed-- an opening occurred in at the foreign department and they asked me if I'd be interested. I said, "Sure." Well, you had to have some knowledge of languages to work in the foreign department so theyput me

Federal Reserve Bank in New York City
on the desk that covered France and the low-countries, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg.And I read the reports, financial reports that came into the bank, and analyzed them, and summarized them, and gave my interpretation. Those reports went to the managers of the bank, the vice presidents etcetera. And as it happened, my boss was the world's gold expert. In the first place you've got to understand the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is the largest bank in the world. It's the bankers' bankAnd one of my colleagues, aside from my boss who was the gold expert, was a
young man whom I've just recently found is in the spotlight on the world stage. He's one of Barack Obama's, President Obama's advisers, and it's Paul Volcker. Paul was-- he's somewhat younger than me. I didn't think so because he's so large. He's massive. And his office was about 20 feet away from where I worked. I didn't have an office. I was one of the crew, so to speak. And he was-- I really don't know Paul Volcker

what his job title was because he. was fresh out of Princeton As I told you before, I could have gone there but didn't. I might have been a classmate of his, I don't know. But any rate. Paul Volcker worked close by. My only contact with him other than saying hello in the morning and good evening when we left the place might have been in the cafeteria in the building or at seminars. The Federal Reserve, in those days, had a routine that maybe once a month or thereabouts they would invite prominent economists from around the area, Harvard, Yale, Brown, Princeton, Columbia, NYU, Fordham, who knows, and we'd sit down in a conference room which is huge. It's

maybe three times four times the size of this room and it has a huge table that might be about, who knows, 35 feet long. And of course you get a lot of give and take at that kind of a session because it's not just a speech it's more of a discussion. The only other contact I had with Paul Volcker was when my mother died in 1948 and he heard me, or heard that I had that loss, he asked me to come into his office and he tried to console me. We talked a little bit, but he's really come up in the world. I mean, he became Federal Reserve Chairman and he's now right at the President's elbow.

Q: One of the interviews we conducted for this series was Stanley Van Ness, the State's Public Advocate who later became Director of Prudential Insurance and served on the Prudential board with Paul Volcker.

Harold Martin: Oh really? Wow.

Q: And I remember asking Stanley was he ever intimidated by serving on the same board as Paul Volcker and he said, "Definitely, yes."

Harold Martin: Oh yeah. He's such a big fellow, such an imposing person that you can't help but being, as you said, I don't know whether intimidated, but you're aware that here's a real personage.

Q: Well, let's go back and continue the story at this point. You're at the Federal Reserve, and I take it from your chronology that you're taking the course from Arthur Burns really had no connection to your taking the job. You saw the job and then thought of it.

Harold Martin: No, I don't think it had. I don't know what I put on the application, but I don't think it had. I think the thing is that they needed somebody and my background seemed to gel with them.

Q: And did the experience at the Federal Reserve prove helpful later in your business career?

Harold Martin: Oh yes. Yes. It helps in this way that in the first place that has a prestige value on any application. You put that down and it opens eyes. And from my personal knowledge experience I learned how to handle statistics. We used to have a piece of equipment that was about 18 inches or 20 inches across, a metal box, and it was a calculator. Of course nowadays you've got all sorts of computers, but in those days if you wanted to carry figures out to five, six, seven, eight, ten decimal points, which we did, not all the time but on occasion, you had to use a Frieden Calculator. And what it would do is as it hit another decimal point the whole carriage, like a typewriter, would flip up and move to a different position. And one of the things that we used to do just for lark, because handling statistics day in and day out can get kind of boring to say the least. Just to vary it we would try to outguess the equipment. And we'd put the figures in and say quickly, "It's going to come out to six decimal points and the first one is going to be one, or two or three," and it was a game. It sharpens your wits. Like when I was a kid I used to try to figure out what the batting averages were or the ERA, that sort of thing. It has a tendency to make you think real quick-like. And aside from that writing the reports you had to be focused. You had to realize the bosses that you're sending these to have limited time to read what you're writing. Even though you think it's important it isn't important to them unless they read it, and so you had to gear it to them to make sure that they would read it.

Q: What year did you leave the Federal Reserve?

Harold Martin: I think it was '49 if I'm not mistaken. It was either '49 or '50. I don't recall exactly.

Q: And that was to go to Shell Oil?

Harold Martin: No. No. The Shell Oil experience took place at the end of '46 and before I came to Rutgers in '47. It was only a period of about four and a half, five months from about November-- it was either October or November of '46 until the spring, say, April or thereabouts. I went to summer school at Rutgers in '47, so that was only a short period of time. And as I said, that job ended in disagreement.

Q: At Shell Oil you were in a much different role than you were with the Federal Reserve.

Harold Martin: Oh yes. That was editorial. That was putting a newspaper together. That was putting a newspaper together, and I had very limited experience as far as newspapers are concerned. The only experience I had was in the Army when as a sideline, when I was part of cadre training the office of my commanding officer wanted a once a week, I guess it was, newspaper which was nothing more than a mimeographed sheet saying something about the troops. This one had a baby. This one got married. This one got engaged, personal notes, and maybe if an event took place. I put on some boxing matches as a sideline, arranged for the matching of fighters and having them tested by doctors before they went into the ring, and hired, when I say hired, named this guy or that guy to be a referee, that sort of thing. It was more in the nature of entertainment. But turning out the newspaper I turned out about, oh I don't recall, maybe 20 or 30 of them. I put them together in a pile and when I went for a job to show that I could write I would present that.

Q: Let's go back to leaving the Federal Reserve and what's the next step?

Harold Martin: When I left the Federal Reserve my brother had become a sales representative on his own for a couple of electronics firms selling components that went into radio, because at the end of World War II there was a shortage of electronic entertainment equipment. Radios, people were buying them by the millions and they couldn't produce them fast enough. And then TV started to come along. TV was in its infancy, and you could sell all the components that you could make. And he was fortunate in that he built up a good reputation as a sale rep, and he had so much business he didn't know how to handle it all. So he asked me, he says, "You're not making much money at the Federal Reserve," and they paid very little, at banks in those days. The salaries that you hear today are wild, are absolutely wild, but in those days, I don't recall what I was getting at the bank, but they gave me a $25 dollar raise at the end of my first year. And I asked the fellow who was my immediate boss, my superior, I said, "Is this all you get as a bonus, as an increase?" He said, "Well, I've been here for, I don't know how many, ten-12 years," he says, "I don't get much more than that." So I decided then and there that I didn't want that as a career. It might have been a mistake, I don't know, because Geithner has done well and a few of the others who headed up the Federal Reserve, but any rate, be that as it may I joined my brother. I had to shift gears because going from being a statistical analyst, an economic analyst to being a salesman is a big shift. You have to deal with people instead of figures. You've got to anticipate what their thinking is, and it took me, oh, a good six-eight months or thereabouts to make that transition, but once I did I became an excellent salesman.

Q: And of course, as you said, you'd had the training since you were a boy in your father's clothing store.

Harold Martin: Exactly, and people when I walked in they liked me and gave me orders. You bring orders to the people you're working for and that's what counts.

Q: Was there anything similar about selling electronics to selling men's suits?

Harold Martin: Now you asked me a while ago about how did I meet Yates. Is that what you are interested in?

Q: At some point, but I don't want to push you too far ahead in the story.

Harold Martin: Well, go ahead.

Q: Well, Charlie Yates, who we both know well, you know him much better than I did, was a state senator, a candidate for governor at one point.

Harold Martin: And also an assemblyman.

Q: And an assemblyman, and a leading Democrat in Burlington County when Democrats were very few and far between.

Harold Martin: Right. Right.

Q: But talk about your relationship with Charlie Yates and the business relation and personal relationship.

Harold Martin: Yeah, well I didn't meet Charlie Yates, the one that you referred to, the assemblyman, senator etcetera until much later on. When I say later on, I went into the electronics representation business in 19 late '49 I guess it was, and after a couple of years one day my brother called me and he says, "What are you doing Sunday?" I was, at that point, living in Englewood. I hadn't been married yet, and I said, "I'm free this Sunday." He says, "Well, there's a meeting I'd like you to come with me to you might find interesting." It was in Englewood up on the hill. When I say up on the hill Englewood has different sections as you may be aware, and the hill section is where the wealthier people live. And we went to this house. I was introduced to the host and he was a businessman in the tire business. Apparently he had a good business going, and he introduced me, introduced my brother and I, to two other people. Yeah, there was only-- I think there was only two, four, five of us there, one of whom was a, for the want of a better term, an all around idea man in technical things dealing with metals and chemicals. That was Charles Yate's father, Charles E. Yates. The Charles that you mentioned is Charles B. Yates, his son. Well, Charles E. Yates worked for Anaconda Copper, a very large producer of copper, and they were making foil, copper foil for building materials, principally for roofing applications. And Charles Yates, E. Yates, was one of their key technicians down in Perth Amboy at the copper factory there. The other gentleman was a co-worker with him. When I say co-worker, not working down at Anaconda, the two of them had worked on the Manhattan Project up at Columbia University during World War II.

Q: To build the atomic bomb.

Harold Martin: Yeah, except they probably didn't know it was a bomb. I don't know whether they did or they didn't but I don't think they did because that was broken up into a lot of different segments, and some people out in Chicago, or Columbia, or Harvard or wherever the project was being put together may not have known each other let alone what they were-- how they fit into the bomb project. At any rate, the purpose of our meeting, they wanted to propose to the host and my brother and I-- there might have been one other person, I don't recall, present to set up a business to make copper foil like what they were doing down at the Perth Amboy factory, but to make it for electronic uses which meant making a finer quality product. If you use if for building material it could be just copper foil. If you make it for electronic equipment you can't have any pinholes. If you have pinholes in building material it's really of no consequence, provided they're not big pinholes. At any rate, Charles Yates had done considerable improvement in the process and so he asked us to set up a joint venture with them. They would supply the know-how and we would supply the money. Venture capitalism is what it's called right now, but don't forget this was 1950, I guess. At any rate, we agreed. We set up a factory down in Bordentown.

Q: When you say we would supply the money was it personal money or corporate money?

Harold Martin: Oh no, it was personal money, a small amount, it wasn't a large amount. I don't recall whether all told it might have been a hundred thousand. It's peanuts in today's terminology. At any rate, we did that. The business took hold and before long we had IBM, GE, Westinghouse, Motorola, oh you name it, anybody who was anybody in electronics knocking at our door because they didn't like the foil that Anaconda Copper was supplying them with. It had too many pinholes. Ours had no pinholes.

Q: Explain the importance of foil in the hardware.

Harold Martin: Yeah, yeah, that's a good question. Foil was put onto a carrier, a board, a phenolic board, a plastic board. It was brownish in color, dark brown in color, cemented on, and then on top of that was put an electronic circuit which meant little fine lines going from this component to that component to another component to another

component.

Q: That would be a circuit board.

Harold Martin: To make a circuit, right, exactly. And then that board with the ink on it, which would protect the area that they wanted to keep, you would put that board into an acid tank and that would dissolve all of the copper except what you want, and that made the circuit. And then, of course, that was processed, and holes were put in so that you could mount a transformer, or a condenser, or a tuner, or whatever to make the radio or television, television board. Of course it's all different now. It's done a lot differently now. But any rate, in those days that's what they did, and we were number one. Everybody wanted our product. Now, to carry it a step further. Every business at some point needs more capital, right? I had not yet met Charles B. Yates, because he was only a youngster. He was probably still in high school, right? There's a big difference in age between my age and Charles B. There wasn't much of a difference between Charles E. Yates, his father, and me. It might have been eight-ten years, something like that, but I was much older than Charlie, right? At any rate, one day at a board meeting, I was on the board of directors of the company, I said, "We're going to need a lot more capital if we want more production," which we needed badly to supply our customers. We've got to build a lot more equipment. We may need another building. So I suggested that we float a stock issue and the board agreed with me. So I said, "Do you mind if I approach somebody on Wall Street?" Well, I had a small account that I'd had there for years at the leading brokerage firm in those days known as Hayden Stone. That was where all the wealthy people drove down in their limousines down to Wall Street and saw their brokers and maybe had lunch down there. So I went up to Hayden Stone, saw my broker and told him what I was there for. He says, "Well, I don't handle that kind of thing," he says, "But let me introduce you to Arthur Rock." I don't know if that name means anything to you. It probably doesn't mean anything to either of you. Arthur Rock was a Harvard graduate who struck it rich by-- he was the lead guy in those days. This is now about 1958, '59, '60, right about there. He was making a name for himself putting together some big deals as they called them, and I was only a small deal. But Arthur Rock liked the idea that I presented to him because it was a different business. And he may not have appreciated the full range of it, but he understood that something was cooking and he said, "Yeah, I think we'll be interested," and he introduced me to his boss. I guess he was one of the vice presidents. And I said, "Why don't you come down and look us over?" He said, "Yeah, I'd like to do that." So he came down and looked us over. He brought with him another vice president and they were impressed. And so, of course, a couple of my colleagues on the board, wanted their brokers to get it. So there was a little competition. To make a long story short my broker won out. Hayden Stone did the deal. And if you go back to 1960 and read the newspapers you'll find that-- I think we went under the name of Circuit Foil at the time. We changed it. Originally it was Copper Foil and then somebody said, "That's not-- hasn't enough glamour. You've got to have a little glamour." So they said, "Well, how about Circuit?" So we said, "Yeah, that's good." So we named it Circuit Foil.It came out at $7.50 a share. It was only 108,000 shares, small, small potatoes in terms of deals and before long it went up over $100 dollars, and we had to float additional stock, and it became a success story.I probably didn't bring those pictures with me, but I have pictures of Charles E. Yates, Charles B. Yates who was just a, I guess at that point he might have been a college student, and his sister. He had an older sister. Maybe she was a younger sister, at any rate, and myself, my brother and one of our directors, and the president and vice

president of the American Stock Exchange on the floor of the Exchange

Harold (3rd from right) with Yates Industries principals upon public offering.

And then a few years later we move our listing over to the New York Stock Exchange and then we changed the name to Yates Industries. But it became a real success story. Not as big as Texas Instruments, or IBM, or RCA, not in their league but a good size.

Q: You also had a career on Wall Street as an account executive. Why don't you discuss that a little bit with Shearson Hammill?

Harold Martin: I'm sorry I didn't catch...

Q: As an account executive with Shearson Hammill.

Harold Martin: Oh me, yes. Yeah, what happened there at one point around 1962, I guess it was, yeah I guess it was '61, '61, around that time, I decided I'd had enough of being an electronic salesman. It got kind of wearing. I had to cross the George Washington Bridge in traffic maybe two-three times a day, and I didn't like fighting traffic. I didn't like sitting in a car. So many hours to go from point A to point B and I said, "I've got to do something that's more challenging than this." So I gave up my business. My brother had already gotten out of the business. He went down to live in Florida. And I sold what was left of the business and decided I would retire for a while. Well, I got tired of retirement in short order and I applied for a job in the stock brokerage business, and I took the exam. I went through a training course for, I don't recall, three-four months. I passed the exam and I became a stockbroker, so they call it, just a salesman. You're selling stocks and bonds. They give it a fancy title. They call it account executive. At any rate, I didn't like that business very much. It was just not my cup of tea. And in '63 I got onto the-- it was either '62 or '63 I got interested in politics in my town. I went to a lot of board meetings, planning board, zoning board, council meetings, and one of the councilmen, a guy by the name of Raymond McGrath from Hudson County, Jersey City, he took a shine to me and he said, "Harold, how would you like to be on the planning board?" I said, "Fine." So he put my name in. The mayor and council approved. I became a planning board member. And while I was on the board we rezoned. We rezoned a large tract of land that we wanted to keep in open space. It was just barren, it was wooded land, and they wanted to make golf courses out of them. And that was a way of keeping the land un-built on. So we approved three golf courses on a couple hundred acres. I guess it was maybe 250-275 acres or so. Or course nowadays it's been rezoned by subsequent planning board and now it's full of-- when I say multi-million I'm talking about multi-multi million houses, mansions, mansions with who knows how many rooms, 15-20 rooms.

Donald Linky : Before we proceed with your Bergen County political career I wanted to bring you back about ten years before. In 1952 at an Adlai Stevenson rally you meet your wife Reba who is sitting here eavesdropping and maybe heckling at some point. So you were involved in politics earlier in some way.

Harold Martin: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: Talk about that.

Harold Martin: My interest in active politics got going really after the '48 election. I was one of those who

misjudged. I think it's the only election I've really misjudged, it was Truman's victory. I was still at the Federal Reserve in '48, as you may recall, and if you recall from your history knowledge Truman got awfully bad press, awfully bad press. He was being written off, and I thought that the former Vice President Wallace was going to succeed. Of course that didn't come to pass. And then, of course, it looked like Dewey was going to win the '48 election. So it came as a surprise to all of us. I sat up all through the night of that election rejoicing in a way because I didn't want to see Dewey win. And when Truman won I was ecstatic. So I went to work the next morning bleary eyed and I was assigned to figure out what happened. So I went to the newspapers, delved into as many articles and magazine articles, and what happened in that election, a couple of things happened. In the first place Truman made that whistle stop tour which did him immense goodwill. That was man to man, and the people loved it, and he hit the boondocks where people don't ordinarily see a presidential candidate. And old Harry had the old Missouri quality. He was one of them, and incidentally his background and mine in politics, if you were to read Truman's biography and mine you'd see some similarities because we were both freeholders, except he was called a commissioner.

Q: And fathers who had haberdasheries.

Harold Martin: That's right, and some of the things he did and I did were very similar when we were in office. At any rate and he also could ride horse back. And that's another story when he lost his glasses in battle and he was blind. His eyesight was so poor he didn't even know where the glasses were. Oh, you've got to read that biography. At any rate, the other thing that happened and a lot of people weren't aware of, and I certainly wasn't aware of it, there was a professor up at Cornell in the Ag school who had predicted back in the summer, way before the election, that Truman was going to win. I missed that article. A lot of people missed that article because it apparently didn't reach everybody. But I found that article and I read it, and it made a lot of sense. It had to do with the price of grain and corn. I don't recall the details, but Dewey had no knowledge of farm life. He was a city slicker and he came across that way, and here's old Harry from the farm belt. It was a natural and he won the election.

Q: Well, lets get a little more personal and talk about your meeting Reba and how that happened.

Harold Martin: Oh, as I recall we were at a house party. Well, we had been at a-- on Palisade Avenue, Englewood they're all stores, and there was a store that was being used by the Democratic County Committee there for campaign purposes. And they had a rally and I guess we both were there for the rally. And I had met her, and I guess we just said hello or whatever, and then the next thing we were invited to a house party sponsored by one of the wealthier Democrats up on the hill who had a big home. And we met there and apparently there was a spark, and we started to date, and then a couple of years later we got married.

Q: I thought it was four years later.

Harold Martin: Yeah, there was another election. Yeah, we lost the '52 election and then I don't know. We saw each other for a while. I guess, at any rate, I was dating other girls and then in '56 we campaigned for Stevenson again and there we started to date on a regular basis.

Q: And what was Reba doing at that time?

Harold Martin: Oh, she was working for-- well, she was working for Buitoni, the pasta people. She was Mr. Buitoni's right hand girl or left hand girl. What was he, right handed or left handed? At any rate if he wanted to know whether the sauce was good or bad he had her taste it. That was her job.

Q: But she was a college graduate of Drew University, which was not very common in those days.

Harold Martin: She's a pasta taster. Hey, how do you like that for a title, pasta taster?

Q: Now, was your political involvement in those days simply campaigning for people or giving money or how was it?

Harold Martin: A little of both. I couldn't give very much. I didn't give very much. I'm not a big spender. As a matter of fact if you were to check the reports in Trenton, the election return reports, financial reports I don't think there's anybody could match me for miserliness. I operated my campaigns on a shoestring.

Q: Okay, well let's now flip back where we sort of left off with your Bergen County political career and take it there. You were on the planning board and what happened next?

Harold Martin: All right, what happened then I was working trying to get a brokerage license. I was going through a training course at a firm that is no longer in existence, Shearson Hammill, which subsequently became-- it's now part of Citicorp, but in those days Shearson Hammill, well it was only Shearson at that time as I recall. It didn't become Shearson Hammill until a couple of years later. Shearson had an office down at 90 Pine Street in New York and they put me through a training program. One night, and I was still going through the course, one night in early March,only a few days before filing deadline. We were just sitting down to dinner and the phone rang. Reba picked it up and she said, "Ruth Saverio is on the phone. She wants to talk to you." So I picked it up and said, "Hi Ruth." Ruth Saverio was a County Committeewoman in Cresskill who was a very dedicated Democrat, a very bright woman, and she knew that I was on the planning board. She knew that I had made some proposals that made the newspapers, and she put my name in as a possible third candidate for freeholder of Bergen County. And she said, "Harold, I hope you don't mind but I put your name in and they need a candidate, a third freeholder candidate. They're desperate." Bergen County Democrats had lost freeholder races for 52 years going back to Woodrow Wilson's day. So you run out of candidates after a while. So I said, "That's nice of you Ruth." I said, "I appreciate that, but isn't that pushing it a little because in politics you're supposed to lick stamps, you're supposed to close envelopes, you're supposed to put stuff in envelopes, you're supposed to make telephone calls." I said, "I haven't been doing that." She said, "Forget about that." She said, "I put your name in. Are you interested?" I said, "Let me think about it over night, Ruth." I said, "I see some reason to do it, but I want to talk it over with Reba." I had already, in following the news, made up my mind back in '63 that Goldwater was going to run, and who was his opponent? I think it was Nelson Rockefeller, and between the two, while I would prefer not as a Democrat but just as a voter, I would prefer to see Rockefeller head the Republican Party. But I knew that the conservatives were too strong too beat. And I figured Goldwater would be the candidate. If Goldwater ran then I wanted to be on the ticket. And so the next day, after talking if over with-- Reba said, "You're crazy to do it. This is wild." I said, "I'm going to do it." So I called Ruth Saverio and I told her yes. She says, "All right, come in Thursday night," or whatever, "Come in, the County Committee wants to interview you.--not the whole Committee, but the County Chairman, Vice Chairman, all the major players." So I went in. There was a whole battery of people. I don't know, ten, twelve, whatever, and they all fired questions at me. I had a resume that I gave them, and they were impressed. And to make a long story short they said "yes", and they put my name on the ballot. While I had no experience running for elective office, he others did. Ben Mazur, whom I'm sure you knew, he had run for Mayor of Fort Lee and for freeholder, two or three times. He headed our freeholder ticket. The other candidate was Gene Walsh, a young fellow, (younger than me), who was a salesman for a paper company. He ran for council or Mayor of Englewood and lost. As for the campaign, I made very few speeches. I was in the entourage with U.S. Senator Pete Williams and Governor Richard J. Hughes and Congressional candidate Henry Helstoski. Henry Helstoski was the mayor of East Rutherford. He had been a school teacher, then a principal and then superintendent of the school system before becoming mayor Henry was a very bright guy and a very forceful speaker.

Q: Who would later be a congressman.

Harold Martin: Yes. And he ran for Congress on the ticket. I made a few speeches here and there. My name appeared in the newspaper half a dozen times, maybe, on page 56, "Also in the entourage was Harold Martin of Cresskill." In the pile of papers I gave you, you'll find a story, a newspaper story that describes what election day was like for me. To burn off energy and to keep my nerves under control, I voted early and I went down to Sears

Roebuck and I bought a humidifier to put into my heating system. And so for much of the day I was cutting metal and inserting the equipment in, and I connected the thing up, and then about eight p.m. I said, "Reba, get dressed. We're going down to get the results." And I also said, "I think I'm going to win." We went down to our polling district and got the returns and I said, "We have won this election." Why? Because the town of Cresskil is a swing town, although basically Republican at that point, and the results came in indicating I was going to win. And I said, "If we win here then we're going to pick up certain other towns and I'm convinced that we're going to beat them." At about nine thirty p.m. we went down to Bergen County Democratic headquarters in Hackensack. We no sooner walked in then we heard a shout, "There's Harold," and they picked me up and they put me on the shoulders of some big guys, and in Indian fashion they marched around for maybe 20 minutes or a half hour doing an Indian chant, "Harold Martin has won." The county Democratic Chairman, Danny Amster, came out and he said, "Hey you guys, pipe down. We haven't heard from Saddle River. We haven't heard from Upper Saddle River. We haven't heard from Woodcliff Lake. We haven't heard from Mahwah. We haven't heard from Ridgewood, all heavily Republican districts." Sure enough, after the returns were pretty well in, along about two o'clock in the morning or so we went down to Henry Helstoski's tent in East Rutherford right off of Route 3. There was a huge crowd down there--newspaper people and photographers all over the place, Steve here would have loved to have been down there, I'm sure. At any rate, it was pretty clear that we had won that election and it was historic. And I've got a letter from Pete Williams, I guess that you may have seen, calling it an “historic victory”, and it was.

Q: Apart from the help from the top of the ticket with the landslide for Johnson over Goldwater were there more local issues in the county that helped you?

Harold Martin: Oh yes, yes, of course. After 52 years in office, maybe not with the same people, of course, but with the same kind of aura or mindset you develop enemies. The Republicans had a lot of enemies amongst their own crew because this one didn't get a promotion. That one didn't get an increase in salary. This one's relative didn't get hired. Somebody else got fired in the family, all sorts of personal things, but there were also other issues. Bergen County like other places was growing and there was a need for more care for the less fortunate, kids with disabilities, older people who needed transportation to go to doctors or dentists, and the road system, not that freeholders can do very much about that, but they get blamed for it. And so we capitalized on a lot of that stuff. We told them, "Look, there's a need to this, a need to do that, a need to do something else and let's do it," and it hit a sensitive nerve. Not only that but I don't know whose idea it was. I'll say the County Chairman deserves the credit. Danny Amster who's now in a nursing home, he doesn't recognize anybody, I saw him a few months ago and he doesn't know who I am. He's changed. At any rate, the Bergen County Democratic organization turned out a newspaper and you'll have a copy of it in the material I gave you. It's called “Profile of a Party”, and I don't recall whether it's 12 pages or 14 pages or whatever, you'll find things like I've just been telling you about, things that we proposed to do, things that the Republicans didn't do, and pictures of us as a family. They got a picture of Reba and myself, and our four kids and our dog, and the same thing with the other freeholder candidates. And it registered. It was a marvelous piece. And we won. And the interesting thing that you as a political scientist, and you would like to know, I am a statistician and amongst other things I took and analyzed, I did that with all of my elections, even the ones that I lost, and surprisingly enough if I had headed the ticket I would have been congressman instead of Helstoski. I scored more votes in Bergen County. See, the district that Helstoski ran in covered North Bergen in Hudson County as well as Bergen County, and his margin of victory was attributable to, in good part, to the votes he got in Democratic Hudson County. I outscored him in Bergen County. I don't know whether it's a few hundred or a few thousands votes or whatever. I outscored him. He was much higher up on the ticket. I think what happened, and the reason I ran ahead, my two colleagues almost lost. I would have only been the lone Democrat freeholder. They barely won. They got by with, I don't know, three hundred votes or five hundred votes, I won by twenty-five or twenty-six hundredvotes. Now that meant, just for your information, that meant we turned around over one hundred thousand votes. That's a lot of votes.

Q: Of course much later in the 1973 election when you get elected to the Assembly, Brendan Byrne has said that he might not have run for governor if Congressman Helstoski had entered the race that year because he didn't think he would...

Harold Martin: You're raising a good point, because Bergen County is a premier county in terms of elections in

New Jersey for two, maybe three important reasons. The first reason is it's a very wealthy county. Morris comes close, but it's very wealthy. It's very large, a large population and a diverse population. Up until '64 when I ran it was basically a Republican stronghold. If you lose fifty-two elections you know the other guy has something. At any rate, the other reason that I would suggest to you is that a lot of our constituents worked in New York City and they have a different mindset. Those people, a lot of them even though they may be Republicans, they are more independents. Just to give you an example. When I ran in '64 I was invited to homes that did not like Goldwater. So I had an entrée into Republican homes. And word of mouth is better than almost anything you can think of in politics. If people get on the phone and say, "Hey, I saw so and so today and he's a wonderful guy," you know? And I had a little dog, Frisky, a little mixed beagle that everybody loved. Anybody who saw Frisky wanted to pick her up and hug her, and I used to walk that dog for miles through my town, through Alpine, through Demarest and more people knew Frisky, at any rate, and that dog's picture was in the paper.

Q: Now, the Democrats take control of the freeholder board in '64?

Harold Martin: No. We didn't take control. We only won three seats. We won three. We were the minority, but we were a very vocal minority. And there were a couple of issues that came up, and one of my colleagues ran with that. There was a meat scandal. Over the years apparently the Republicans had seen fit to give contracts to a certain meat vendor in Hackensack. And I don't want to go into details because it's really academic at this point, but he turned that into an inquiry and that made the headlines. The other thing that was important were mosquitoes. I headed the mosquito-- I didn't head the commission because that's a separate commission, but I was the freeholder representative to the commission. In other words, their budget had to come to me for approval, and I sat in on their meetings. And when spring came I would get into the mosquito boat. It's a motor propelled boat that is propelled by a fan. You've seen them on television, and we'd go through the Meadowlands and my picture would appear in the newspapers, "Freeholder Martin inspecting the mosquito problem," etcetera and it registers. And then of course we had the question of the community college. The question was where to put the community college.I was instrumental in getting the Board to appoint the man that I wanted to head the study commission, which later became the commission that appointed the president of the college and the board to run the college. I recommended a certain gentleman who was the head of a business, a big business, a man I had met and he had impressed me. And it just so happened, that he was selected. The Republicans who still had the Board majority, agreed with me. I made my two Democratic colleagues mad, because they wanted somebody else. But I said, "Look, let's put politics aside. I want the best person that I can find to go on that board," and he was appointed, and we got the college up and going.

Q: Well, let me bring you back because we'll deal with that, I think, during your Assembly career. But I wanted to go back to your mention that you campaigned at least briefly with Governor Hughes in those days when you're running for freeholder. We've heard during a series of these interviews various comments about Governor Hughes as a politician. What was your own take on Governor Hughes?

Harold Martin: My take on-- my impression of Governor Hughes, in the first place I had not met him until I ran for freeholder. And I was with him many, many times on the campaign trail. He impressed me. I was aware, I was aware that there were people who were saying, "He's not dynamic. He doesn't speak that well. He doesn't excite people," oh, a whole host of things. That he's a small town country lawyer, a whole raft of negatives. I met him. I was on the trail with him, and I was fascinated by his ability In a low key to get people's goodwill. He may not have excited them the way Pete Williams could do, because Pete Williams was an orator, he couldn't excite them the way Henry Helstoski could because he was a firebrand, a very knowledgeable one, and so my impression was that if I wanted to copy anybody I wanted to copy Hughes because I couldn't be a Pete Williams. Pete had a certain talent for speaking. And I certainly couldn't be a Helstoski because I don't believe in bombast. And so who would I get

my political smarts from? I watched Dick Hughes and what he would do is come into a house, he excelled at this. He'd come in. The first thing he'd do when the event started, when he was introduced by the host, and sometimes it was only a small group. It might have been ten people, 12 people, neighbors, other times there might have been 30 people in the living room. He would turn to the host and say, "Thank you," real genuine from the heart kind of thing, and then he would talk on a person to person basis and he would ask people, "Well, if you have a question I'll be happy to answer it." It was a very simple direct approach and I found that that was a real smart thing to do. And he made a lot of friends. He made a lot of friends, and he won.

Q: Now let's talk. You're beaten after serving a three year term as freeholder. You're out of elected office. Are you just focusing back now on the business career?

Harold Martin: When I finished with freeholdering I became a man of leisure. We had four kids growing up. We took trips. Went down to Mexico with them, drove down, up and back, took them on flights to various places including Europe, maybe not all of them at once. But my political activity was also going on-- I kept my foot in the door. I went to County Committee meetings. If there was something on a state level that interested me I attended. I kept reasonably active in Democratic Party activities. It's like printer's ink. Once you turn out a newspaper or have a part in it, it's almost a part of you, and so politics was still in my blood. Came '73 when I saw Nixon in trouble I said, "I'd like to run." And so I got a hundred signatures and filed for the Assembly seat in District thirty nine. And I got the nomination with no contest. The primary, of course, was academic, and the election was close, but I won.

Q: Of course this is for the Assembly.

Harold Martin: For the Assembly, yeah. And one of the things that occurred, my first opponent was a doctor, an ear, nose and throat doctor in Englewood. Nice guy, but a very, very conservative man. And low and behold at some point-- oh, I remember now, the financial returns, reports that we had to make. I submitted mine and when I submitted it I decided to look at my opponents return, and low and behold money coming out of Virginia. So I called up the county headquarters and I said, "Can you have somebody trace where this money is coming from?" It turned out there was a certain gentleman by the name of Richard Viguerie or Viguerie, I don't know how he pronounced it, whom I'm sure you're aware of and there's no need for me to go into detail.

Q: Well, for the record, give a brief profile.

Harold Martin: Yeah, for the record, all right. For the record he was one of the people who stays in the background to some extent, although he got a lot of publicity, who furthers the cause of conservatism. Now I'd like to think of it more as reactionism, and he would go into districts that were questionable. And since District 39, my district was a district that they wanted desperately to win, because they knew I had won as freeholder and they were afraid I would score an upset in District 39. So they poured money into my opponent's campaign, and I wanted that to be made public knowledge. And so the county picked it up and made it a newspaper article. I think that helped. Be that as it may I pulled out-- oh, the other thing, there's one other factor there. My other opponent was the Mayor of Dumont, a larger town than mine, the very next town to mine, and he had a reputation of hitting the bottle. And so I think he lost a lot of Dumont folks that I may have picked up. And of course word gets around. You can't hide that sort of thing.

Q: Of course, in addition to the problems affecting Republicans on the national level with the Watergate scandal.

Harold Martin: Oh, of course. Oh yes, I should have mentioned that by all means. The biggest factor, of course, was the Watergate scandal with Richard Nixon and the missing tapes, of course. That was the issue. That was the issue, but on a local level, bringing it down on the district level, there has to be an added factor and I've mentioned them.

Q: Well, how much impact did the state problems affecting the Cahill administration have in your decision?

Harold Martin: Not really. I don't think I really gave that-- I think I gave that short shrift. I was focused on primarily on Nixon and Watergate. I thought that was a wonderful time to run as a Democrat, and it was.

Q: And of course at the top of the state ticket Brendan Byrne enters the race after serving as a judge. Surprisingly, Governor Cahill, the incumbent governor, gets beaten in the Republican primary and Congressman Sandman, a conservative and a Nixon defender in the Watergate scandal, becomes the Republican nominee against Brendan Byrne at that time. What did you see as the impact at the Assembly level in your race to this turn of events?

Harold Martin: Oh, there's no question. You can tell I'm getting old. I should have mentioned that before you raised the question, because it was obvious that if Sandman were to knock off Cahill. Cahill, as you know, was not a conservative by any means. As a matter of fact some people thought he was a Democrat in Republican dress. At any rate, I think it was pretty obvious that with Sandman in place of Cahill that they were going to lose a lot of votes. Oh, yes. So there were really two major factors, the Watergate and the Sandman upset.

Q: What role, if any, did you take in the Democratic gubernatorial primary and the candidates opposing Brendan Byrne?

Harold Martin: Oh well, I went to-- I don't know if I told you this off camera, but somewhere along the line when it became obvious that Brendan was going to have, Brendan Byrne was going to have opposition from some of his coworkers, shall we say, that he would perhaps get into a state of mind where he would be uncertain as to whether he would want to run.

Q: Well, I'm talking now about 1973.

Harold Martin: Oh, you're talking aboutseventy-three, oh. Seventy-three I think there was no question in my mind that Brendan Byrne would be a tremendous asset to the program, to the campaign, and I was delighted, really delighted when he won the nomination.

Q: I assume your focus, at least in the early part of the campaign was simply on your own race rather than on the gubernatorial level.

Harold Martin: Well, split because I know that you have to have a lot of support. There has to be a spin off from the top to come down to the district level to bring you in. In my district, in District 39 you need all the support you can get as a Democrat.

Q: Of course, on Election Day you are elected to the Assembly. Do you remember the sort of party or the reaction election night?

Harold Martin: You know, election night of '73 I don't rightly recall. I am searching my mind. I don't recall what we did. I know there was a celebration. We probably went down to Democratic headquarters, and I don't know whether that was the time that-- there was one election where we tried to get into South Hackensack, I think, Little Ferry. For some reason or another they were holding a party there, and it was a rainy night, and we never could get to the party because Route 3 was-- was it Route 3? No, Route 46. Excuse me, under water by about 18 inches or so. We couldn't cross Route 46 to get to the party, but I'm not sure which election it was. After a while a lot of elections merge.

Q: Merge together. We have to take another break.

Harold Martin: Sure. Oh, I didn't know I could talk this long.

Harold Martin : No, that’s all right. However, we stopped before we broke at the 1973 election. We were elected to the Assembly, Brendan Byrne was elected governor, discussed, I guess, going down to Trenton and what the legislature was like in those days, who were the key people that you first met. As I recall, when we won that election, it was like a landslide in terms of bodies-- when I say “bodies”, Assembly and Senators in Trenton. My recollection, and you can check the figures if you have the data, we became the majority party by quite a margin. I think we had 66 Democrats and 14 Republicans, to the best of my knowledge. And that represented a major

turnaround for a couple of reasons; in the first place, with such a large majority, you don't have to worry about one or two votes when again it comes time to pass a bill, and that was one thing. Of course the other thing, major, is that you get to occupy the key positions, being Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, the majority leaders in both Houses, Committee Chairman. And you have almost a free hand in legislating and we did. We went ahead. Of course, it has its downside because some people, either man or woman, gets to think that they can do no wrong and egos start to clash, but by and large, we got along pretty well. We had a speaker who was very temperate. Howard Woodson was, as I recall, our first speaker. He was followed by Joe LeFante and after Joe LeFante, I think it was Bill Hamilton, if I'm not mistaken, and all three very competent, very good men. And we had Al Burstein and we got along fine. The atmosphere was one of compatibility. Tom Kean was leader of the Republicans in the Assembly and he's a very moderate type of individual; a knowledgeable, experienced legislator, so we got along fine.

Donald Linky: Of course, one downside of having such a super majority is maintaining party discipline because you have so many votes, it's sort of difficult to keep the troops in check, isn't it?

Harold Martin : Yeah, of course, of course.

Q: And as Brendan Byrne takes office, things seem to be going very well. He implements the odd-even gasoline rationing program during the Arab oil boycott.

Harold Martin : Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that because coming from Bergen County, I had an hour and 20 minute ride, or an hour and a half ride, depending upon traffic. And I used to use the Turnpike to Newark and then take Route 1 down. Sometimes I'd take the Turnpike all the way down. It depended, and a good deal of it depended on whether I could get gasoline. And so sometimes you'd have to wait in line and sometimes it could be a pretty long wait, so it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy to get to Trenton on a number of occasions, and sometimes on a couple of occasions, even though we had free passes on the-- I guess they called it the Pennsylvania Railroad in those days <laughs>. That was before Amtrak. At any rate, using the railroad pass meant driving down to Newark, getting into a parking lot, paying for a day's parking, getting on the train. When I got down to Trenton, I would-- I didn't do this very often, I think I only did it three or four times-- walking or taking a cab from the rail station to the State House, and you'd get to the State House and sometimes nothing would happen during the day. You'd have committee meetings. Sometimes a committee meeting wouldn't take place; somebody didn't show up or maybe the bill hadn't been printed. Whatever the reason, you'd spend the day and it was lost. Or, on the other hand, if I were lucky enough maybe to get a ride back to Newark, as happened on a couple of occasions, I'd get a ride back with a guy by the name of Mike Adubato, one of my colleagues whom you may remember. Well, Mike had a very unusual habit of starting to speak when you'd get going, and he would turn his head toward you, not facing traffic, and he would talk without stop, until you got to Newark. By that time, you were stone deaf <laughs>.

Q: He was a very colorful--

Harold Martin : Oh, to say the least.

Q: I have my own personal stories, but--

Harold Martin : He was a nice guy, very nice guy. He'd give you the shirt off his back as long as you bought your insurance policy from him.

Q: He actually kissed me on the lips once when we signed a bill that he wanted, so the only time that ever happened. But despite Governor Byrne's early success in the first few months of the administration, soon the school and tax issues--

Harold Martin : Yes.

Q: -- come to haunt the administration in that first year.

Harold Martin : Oh, and how.

Q: Talk about that from your perspective.

Harold Martin : Yeah, those two, you put your finger right on them. Let's talk about the tax issue first, although maybe it'd be best to take the education thing first. There was an Assemblywoman, Garvin, from Newark, a black woman who was very intelligent, highly intelligent, very nice, likeable, she, as I recall, is one of the committee people. There was Senator Wynona Lipman, also black, from Newark, also highly intelligent with several degrees from prestigious universities. And Al Burstein from Bergen County, from the adjoining district to mine, District 37. A fellow by the name of Danny Newman, a plumber from Ocean County who was also a very nice guy, a very outspoken individual, and there was a guy by the name of Brian Kennedy, as I recall, was also on the Education Committee, and Senator John Ewing, also on the Education Committee. And I'm trying to think who else. Well, right off, at the moment, those were the major-- oh, Senator Steve Wiley, of course, who I believe was the Chairman of the Education Committee in the Senate. And we were like a traveling troupe, and I say that advisedly because I don't think there was a school district in the state of New Jersey that we didn't visit. And we heard from the ordinary citizens, but primarily we heard from principals, superintendents, teachers, the establishment, teaching establishment. And we heard-- I forget how many hours, I dint keep track of them, but it was a lot of hours, a really lot of hours, and people started to make fun, particularly the newspapers, of us. Newspaper articles. Ads you know, the Constitution of New Jersey back in 1868, was it? Or something—

Q: 1844.

Harold Martin : -- some such figure, put into the Constitution when it made its changes, revised the Constitution, the words "thorough" and "efficient"; that every school child in the state of New Jersey shall be given a thorough and efficient education. Well, that lent itself to many interpretations by many interpreters and after a while, some people started to make fun of it and used another word for T and another word for E. I won't go into that, but at any rate, to make a long story short, we were at our wits' end and that led into the income tax, because T and E, as we interpreted it on the committees, and I use the word advisedly, they had the Assembly Education Committee, you had the Senate Education Committee and then you had something called the Joint Committee on the Public Schools, which was a combination of the two legislative committees, by and large. And we all tried to come up with an answer to thorough and efficient, and the best that we could figure out was that the legislators who revised the Constitution, who knows what they thought, but we thought that what they meant was that the only way you could guarantee a kid a thorough and efficient education was to put sufficient money behind his or her training, and that meant hiring good teachers, good administrators, providing them with books, providing them with buildings that are in good condition, which incidentally, a lot of our buildings are not. Some of them had leaky roofs, some of them had toilets that didn't operate and some where they didn't have adequate books, and all the rest of it. It's a very complex subject and you can't go into it in a couple of minutes, but the net result was that we figured that it would take a lot more money than the state was willing to provide for a thorough and efficient education. Well, that bumped up against the budget and so we had to find a new source of money. And that's when the income tax discussions started to come up, and the first bill that was introduced for the income tax was a bill introduced by Senator Steve Perskie., an Assemblyman from Atlantic County. I don't recall whether there were three or four co-sponsors that he had gotten. The bill was being circulated in the Assembly Caucus. I saw a copy of the bill and since I have long been, for many, many years, long before I got into the legislature, I was convinced that the only proper way for government to raise money was for a graduated income tax, based upon ability to pay. And when I saw the bill, I read it and I said, "I want my name on this bill," and a lot of my colleagues said, "You're crazy. You'll kill yourself politically. You won't get re-elected." I said, "Well, I don't know whether I'll be re-elected anyway. I want my name on the bill." So I got a copy of the bill and I signed it and Steve, of course, was happy. I don't recall whether Bill Hamilton's name was on it. I don't recall who else's names were on that bill, but there were only, like, at most, maybe four names and my name became the fifth name. And then the bill, of course, as you know, ran into trouble. It was hard to sell the idea of an income tax. It always has been. Not just here in New Jersey, but almost any place. And so a court case went through the system and at that point, we had a very intelligent judge by the name of Richard J. Hughes and the majority of the Court decided that they would close the schools in September--

Q: July.

Harold Martin : Oh, excuse me, in July. Right, excuse me, July-- if the legislature didn't come up with money to satisfy T and E. And so then the bill came up in the legislature and a lot of people were surprised; I was one of the last to vote for the bill. I don't know whether you know that. The speeches, as you know, droned on for hours and hours and hours on end. Somewhere in the morning, I don't know whether it was three o'clock, four o'clock in the morning, I had a call from the governor's office. I don't know who called me in, whether it was Jerry English or Lew Kaden or Dick Leone, somebody said, "Harold, the Governor wants to talk to you." So I went in, bleary eyed. I had no idea whether it was night, morning or whatever, or what day it was. And Brendan was in his chair, the Attorney General, Billy Hyland, was there, and I was here. They wanted to know why I wasn't voting for the bill, and I said, "Because I don't think it's going to raise enough money. Instead of two percent, or whatever it was," I said, "I think we ought to have three, three and a half, four. Maybe five. If we're going to do it, let's do it right. Let's not do it twice." They weren't convinced. They agreed with me in principle, but they said, "Look, this is what we got. We got 39 votes," or something like that. "We need your vote." I said, "Well, I'm going to vote for it, but I don't like it. I'd like to have more." So I went out and then I voted for the bill.

Q: Who were those other two?

Harold Martin : I think one of them was Gregorio.

Q: Of course we're talking about 1976, you know, when the income tax passed after a couple of earlier failures for the Byrne administration. And there was some discussion that after the Governor's program failed in its first attempts, that the legislature should take the lead more than the Governor, because the Governor's popularity had declined significantly since his election in 1973 and also that the legislature was feeling, "Well, this should be our program." Did you see it that way, that the legislature was asserting itself more than the Executive, or was that a strategy that the Byrne administration was pushing from behind the scenes?

Harold Martin : A couple of things you've got to keep in mind. I'm sure you're aware of it, but when something-- when I say "something", a bill is on the table, you've got to do something with it, people begin to firm up their opinions. They know that they've got to make a decision and you've got to recognize that this thing had been cooking for a couple of years. Actually, it was cooking for many years before. You know, in some fashion, the need for additional income was present back in the sixties, otherwise we wouldn't have had the sales tax. And legislators are sensitive animals, if I can use that word. They hear from their constituents; this constituent wants this kind of service, and this one wants that kind of service, the roads need repair, you need this, you need that, and sooner or later it gets to you. You recognize that you've got to do something. And then there was the court case, and they weren't going to let the schools close. Oh, to have the schools close in July? Oh my goodness, that would've been a disaster from a public relations standpoint.

Q: There's been some talk that the Byrne administration's problems were somewhat exacerbated by failure to communicate with the legislators in their own language, that the Byrne key staff, particularly the Counsel Lew Kaden and Treasurer Richard Leone, personalities didn't quite mesh with the average legislator.

Harold Martin : Yeah.

Q: Is that true?

Harold Martin : Yes, it was true. There were many aspersions cast in the direction of certain individuals, and I think it was basically a couple of things. Personalities, some of these personalities, exceedingly talented. No question about it. I don't want to name names, but you know them as well as I do. Their personalities just didn't mesh with certain legislators who had egos, who didn't want to be talked down to. After all, they were the legislators and these people were only staff, you know. And who's going to tell whom what to do? So you've got that factor and I don't know what else motivated them to hold it against them, but maybe just that. Who knows?

Q: How about Brendan Byrne himself? How was his relationship with the legislature in leadership meetings or just one-on-one meetings?

Harold Martin : It's hard to say because I have a deep affinity, forget about politics, a deep affinity for Brendan Byrne. Number one, his ability in terms of knowing what to do is right on target. I mean, you get into a situation where it was tough and he had some tough problems; school, T and E, the funding, what kind of funding, how to raise the money, plus all the other things that the legislature is concerned with, from prisons to health institutions, whether to close down this facility or build a new one, or whatever. So it's a tough job and you're dealing with 40 prima donnas in the Senate and 80 prima donnas in the Assembly, and it's a tough proposition. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. So it's tough. But his personality is a low-key personality and some people thought it was too low. Some people said, "Well, you've got to have guts. You've got to speak up." Well, perhaps there's some truth to that. So you know, you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. But I appreciated his humor, I thought some of his gags and his ad libs were fabulous.

Q: Now, you were appointed to key roles in this debate over school funding and tax policy in New Jersey. Was that something you sought out? Did you ask to take on these roles, or did other people come to you and say, "Given your financial background and your business background, we think that you should serve in these roles?"

Harold Martin : I'm glad you asked that question, because you know, there are many times when I ask myself that question. And I have a tendency at times to sit back, as I did when I was a freeholder, I would-- just to digress for a moment. With the freeholders, we had a table three times the size of this, in a room a little bit bigger than this. Nine people. Sometimes we'd call in an aide or assistant counsel, a clerk or whatever. But for the most part, there were nine people sitting there. I would sit quietly, purposely. I wanted to hear so-and-so and so-and-so, I wanted to hear what all of my colleagues had to say, before I would open my mouth. And I found that that's the surest way to get respect. Now, two of my colleagues didn't do that. They would come on, one or the other would come on, and they were suspect. I got along better, I must say, with my Republican colleagues than I got along with my Democratic colleagues. And I found that sometimes, my Republican friends would side with me and I would win. As I told you a little while ago, the man that I named for the County College Commission got the job. And I found that that works, and I did the same thing in the legislature. I kept my mouth shut until I heard as much as I thought was enough for me to then voice my opinion. And you may not know it, and I'm sure you haven't heard, or maybe you did hear; there was one incident, just to give you an example. It was a caucus and it was a mixed caucus, and it had to do with T and E and raising money. And who came into the Caucus? I don't recall everybody that was there. There weren't that many people. There might have been, I'd say offhand, maybe 25 of us, down in the basement of the State House, in the Democratic Caucus Room. I don't recall who conducted the meeting. Well, Senate President Joe Merlino was there, I know. Al Burstein was there. I don't know whether Tom Kean was there; I don't think he was. But Senator Al Beadleston, the Dean of the Senate, a man probably ten years older than myself, he'd been in the Senate for who knows how long and he was holding forth on what he thought we ought to do and telling us his best experience. I didn't like what he was saying, and so I, in a low-key way, not offending him, I took him on in debate. Well, would you believe, the very next day, I got a letter from Joe Merlino, who was President of the Senate, I think, at that time-- you probably have it in the material I gave you-- saying, "You've got guts, Harold, to take on the Dean of the Senate when you're only a freshman." <laughs> And as you know about the State House, it only takes two seconds beyond the meeting for word to get around <laughs> So, you know, that partially answers. I didn't seek the Chairmanship. I didn't know they were going to ask me to do it. You know, I was delighted when they did. You know, being Chairman, you call the bills, you know. You take the vote.

Q: Of course you mentioned before that you were advised not to put your name on the income tax bill.

Harold Martin : Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: -- because of the possible political repercussions. And even before the income tax passed and was enacted into law in 1976, you had an election in 1975 where you had to stand for re-election where you squeaked through, won by 995 votes.

Harold Martin : What happened there, my first running mate, a guy by the name of Herb Gladstone, did not get re-nominated. I don't want to go into the details of that, but he didn't get the nomination. I don't even think he tried to get the nomination, and so they picked a teacher, a high school teacher from New Medford by the name of Fred Sharkey. Nice fellow, somewhat younger than myself, maybe 15, 20 years younger. He was an outspoken kind of guy, ready to talk quickly, maybe not think things through, and he was opposed to the income tax. I told him, I said, "Fred, I think you're making a mistake. In our district, a lot of our constituents work in New York. They pay New York state income tax. If we pass a New Jersey income tax, they'll get a credit. They'll save some money and it'll be for us." It was only at the last moment, maybe a week, two weeks, three weeks before the election, that he gingerly admitted that he might, and he might, support an income tax. I think that cost him the election. He lost by about 250 votes, I don't recall. A small amount. And he asked for a recount and he lost on the recount, but I got through.

Q: Were you optimistic about that election or did you see the handwriting on the wall, that popular sentiment had gone against taxes?

Harold Martin : Oh, I thought it would be a squeaker. I thought it would be a squeaker. It wasn't like 1973. I know that there's a pendulum and I know that I wouldn't have Brendan Byrne at the top of the ticket, that I'd be at the top of the ticket.

Q: How did you handle, though, the fact that Brendan Byrne was the Governor? Was that used as an attack against you by the Republicans?

Harold Martin : You know something, at this point, I don't recall. I supported him right down the line, made no bones, made no bones about it. I don't know, I'd have to go back, look at the press releases, you know.

Q: Because in fact, according to my numbers, the Democratic majority went from 66 to 14 to 49 to 31 through that 1975 election.

Harold Martin : Oh yes, we lost seats. Yes, we lost seats. As a matter of fact, we lost a seat in my district because my running mate lost and we picked up John Markert, a Republican from Washington Township.

Q: Well, the first term of the Byrne administration is dominated by the income tax and the school funding reform, but the political damage is such that people are starting to talk about One Term Byrne and--

Harold Martin : No.

Q: -- wondering whether he'll even seek re-election. How did you feel?

Harold Martin : I wanted him to seek re-election. I always feel that the incumbent must, you know, unless he commits the kind of crime like New York's former Governor Spitzer, that they're entitled to another shot at it. And I thought that he served well and I agreed with him in principle. So I had no difficulty supporting him, but when we come to the 1977 election, which you probably want to lead into, we came to 1977, what happened there, I had to-- when I say "I", I asked Greta Kiernan, who had been my legislative aide, to join me on the ticket. I felt I needed somebody with her knowledge, because she's very knowledgeable in government. She had been very active in the League of Women Voters and she'd understood government. She knew it. And she had been a good aid to me and I wanted her to be on the ticket, to get whatever support she could bring in, because I knew it was going to be a tough race. The Republicans were really gearing to take back that seat and the Conservatives from Virginia and wherever were going to put money into this. And as I told you, I'm a very low spender. I don't care; I'm not going to use money to buy an election. I will not do that. Even on my second and third runs, I spent very, very little and the returns in Trenton will bear that out. Whatever I got in the way of contributions, that was it. Plus a contribution on my own behalf, which was limited, very limited. What happened there-- The Republicans picked two candidates one of whom was-- He's now a senator, Gerry Cardinale, and he was- he's a dentist as you know, a practicing dentist, and a guy by the name of John Inganamort, a builder. Now John Inganamort is a nice guy and in 1964 he

was one of my supporters. I don't know what party he belonged to at that time but he contributed to the Democratic victory. Of course, as a builder he could be expected to contribute to either party or both and he probably did, but at any rate Inganamort was not really a politician, a big guy, a nice guy, a lot of money and all that. The-- Gerry Cardinale and John Inganamort who had now become a Republican party operative, a candidate, they ran an ad in the newspapers and they took off their jackets and they put their jackets over their shoulder like this, hanging, to show that they are with the common people; they are macho guys. Well, every year the Bethel Temple in Closter would hold a pre election candidates' day on a Sunday a few weeks prior to the election. On that Sunday they had their breakfast and they invited us along and I was wondering how can I cut these guys down to size because Cardinale is a hellfire type of candidate. He knows how to speak. He knows which issues to cover, which red-hot buttons to push. Inganamort, well, who knows? I don't think he was much of a public speaker. So at any rate came the breakfast. These two guys get up with their jackets over-the-shoulder. I get up there dressed with a suit and tie and I said, "Before I make my speech to you, I hope you don't mind if I take my jacket off," and I did it with a gesture and I put it over my shoulder and I said, "Now let's start talking politics." Well, the audience just roared. They weren't laughing at me. They were laughing at them. They were laughing at- and the press made hay with that and people read the Record and the other newspapers plus the fact in all three of my elections, all three of my campaigns, I had the support of all of the newspapers, every one of them. Every one of them recommended that I and my running mate be elected.

Q: And of course in those days the newspaper endorsements were probably a lot more important than they are—

Harold Martin: Oh, yeah, a lot more important than they are today. Yeah. Yeah, but a lot of people who were in that audience, not just the people in Closter but others who- Oh, they were-- They thought that was-- It just was a last-minute-- I didn't know what else to do and that did it.

Donald Linky: On the gubernatorial level what was your take on the Byrne-Bateman campaign from the beginning right after the primary through the—

Harold Martin: I thought Brendan had the upper hand. I didn't think that Bateman's personality-- He's an- a very nice guy. I have great respect for Ray Bateman. He's talented, qualified, no question about it, and he'd probably make a good governor. I think he would have made a better governor than somebody else I could mention.

Q: You don't want to mention that?

Harold Martin: <laughs> Republican of course.

Q: Were you surprised about the swing in public opinion from the beginning of the general election campaign through November?

Harold Martin: Surprised. Not really.

Q: Let me put in another way. If you were running the Bateman campaign, what strategy would you have suggested that might have been more effective?

Harold Martin: Gee. That's a tough one. I don't know what I would have suggested because every campaign is different. It has its own feel to it. I think that Ray was too low key for one thing. He is a low-key guy and I think he also may have suffered from the fact that he's a moderate, and the Republican Party and what's killing them now in those- it- you don't have to be a political expert to understand this. There is a terrible split which goes way back. It goes back to the time I was a student here, to 1940, when Wilkie and Taft split the party and it's there and it doesn't go away.

Q: On election night where were you? In your district or at state headquarters or don't you remember?

Harold Martin: I think I was at Bergen County Democratic headquarters. The Democratic State Committee turned

out a newspaper. Dick Coffee [former Democratic State Chairman, executive director, Assembly Democrats and State Senator] was the genius behind that. They turned out a newspaper right after the elections that Martin wins in thirty-ninth because that was the big win. They-- I was written off and I think that might have been the second election. Yeah, that might have been '75.

Q: In '77 on election day, and I recall this, there was a terrible rainstorm—

Harold Martin: Well, that's—

Q: --in north Jersey and Manhattan.

Harold Martin: Yeah. That's the one where we had that problem crossing Route 46 then. That's it.

Q: But also from the standpoint of the election there was concern, and you mentioned this before, that the commuters who worked in Manhattan—

Harold Martin: Yeah. Yeah. I think—

Q: --would be stranded in Manhattan and wouldn't be able to get back to vote and they would have been pro -Democratic, pro-Byrne voters because of the impact of the income tax on their bottom lines. Do you remember that or do you remember—

Harold Martin: Yeah.

Q: --being concerned about the turnout in your own election because of that—

Harold Martin: No. No. I-- To be honest with you, I don't recall. I just went down to the to the- my district and got my votes and I waited for the rest of them to come in because unlike '64 I was not sure. Sixty-four it was very clear early on that I was going to win that election, but that was because of Goldwater and Johnson.

Q: Governor Byrne and you were reelected in '77--

Harold Martin: Right.

Q: --and in the second term the Byrne administration turns to other issues. The school funding and tax issues don't go away and there's lots more that's happened since, but let's talk about some of the other issues that you dealt with while you're—

Harold Martin: Yeah. Well, I can't-- My memory is not that good that I can pinpoint things, but there were several things that stand out in my memory as memorable in my service in the legislature. The big thing that I think had the biggest impact of all the things that I did in my period in the legislature-- I think it was in '76. Yeah, it was after the election of '75. We met to reconstitute the assembly and the first order of business was to bring up the rules, and I was so fed up. I was almost on the border of quitting the legislature because I had been a smoker back in the forties, picked it up in the army, and I got to be a two-pack-a-day in the fifties, and I quit because I had a terrible cold or flu or something and the taste of tobacco was terrible so I quit. That was in '52 when Eisenhower ran. I remember the two: Quitting smoking and Eisenhower's election. I couldn't stand the smoke in the assembly. There were days as you well know when the level of smoke was so thick that I had difficulty seeing across the room and between the heat and the smoke it was driving me up a wall because I have a little bit of a breathing problem. And I was determined either they give up smoking or I would quit the legislature so at the very last moment just before the vote on the rules I put in a one-sentence amendment to the rules. I remember I think Chris Jackman was then the chair and he was really fit to be tied. He made faces at me. At any rate, that rule after about an hour or two of debate squeaked by. I don't recall what the vote was, somewhere- 36 or 38 to 32 or whatever, but the rule was adopted and it- as you know subsequently years later the senate barred smoking and then you had a law barring

smoking. So I can take credit legitimately for stopping smoking in New Jersey. That's a heck of a big accomplishment. That's monumental. That's changing people's habits. What can be more basic than that? The other thing that I'm proud of-- I have scoliosis. It's moderate. It's not going to kill me. I don't think so. If it does I've lived long enough but a couple of our girl's friends happened to be sisters, two sisters, friends of my younger daughter I think it is, had to be operated on, big operations for scoliosis. So the first thing I did when I got in to the legislature was to put in a bill to call for yearly physical examinations of the spines of all school children in New Jersey, and that passed; that became law. The other thing that- an accomplishment-- The Child Custody Act. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but up until I introduced the bill the law was that-- It was kind of cloudy as to if- in the cases of child custody suits as to where the case would be heard. Well, the purpose of the Child Custody Act is to have the trial conducted where it's in the child's best interest regardless of the parents' interests and that passed, and of course I think it's nationwide now. It's a uniform Child Custody Act. So those are three, and then there was another bill which reduced the college students' tuition by--I don't recall--a few hundred dollars by giving state supplements.

Q: You mentioned the problems the Byrne administration had during its first term and legislative relationships. Did it improve after the '77 election?

Harold Martin: Not really. I kind of think that there's something inherent with the relationship between legislators and the governor. If you go back in history to the founding of the nation, you'll find that number one, the lower House, whether it be- of course in those days Congress. The lower House was the primary source of the public's reach into government, raise taxes and spend money and provide services. The Senate is a senior meditative, cogitative place. It's got its function but it's basically the lower House so that gives you one clue. The other clue is that-- And that carries through into the state legislatures. The other clue is that when you see a license plate you see a number one on the assembly. Of course, the Senate has copied that <laughs> to some extent. They put their initials on, but the lower House is number one, and they want you to know. They want the governor to know that they are number one, not the governor, not the senate; they are number one. I kind of think that's part of it.

Q: I wanted you to give some just brief take on a few of the big issues that still have impact today that generated in the seventies. Were they successes or failures, the Meadowlands and the sports complex?

Harold Martin: I have mixed feelings about the Meadowlands. I've always thought that that area should have been kept open space. That should have been open space, and I think that was-- And I- I'm at fault as well as the next guy in the fact that it's not, and sometimes you have to bow to public pressure and I think that's what happened. Of course, there are a lot of issues beyond the fact that the Meadowlands has been developed. There's the issue of the dumping and that of course is one of the reasons I felt that that should be kept an open space and maybe not as a dumping ground. Right? But of course I don't know where else to put the stuff. You run out of space. You can't keep putting it into Pennsylvania. You can't keep putting it into upstate New York. Where do you put it? But then of course you got the political, the sleazy part of it, where the contractors and the lawyers and whoever gets into the act. And of course that's messed it up considerably and the public's going to pay a high price for that.

Q: How about Atlantic City and casinos?

Harold Martin: I was against-- I was-- My closest buddy in the legislature was Charlie- Chuck Worthington. He and I were like brothers and as you know he was one of the sponsors, and I was against it up until the last moment and I figured look. Even though it's not my cup of tea, you have to make some trade-offs and I said, "Well, Chuck is my friend. I got to help him." So I voted for it but I don't like gambling.

Q: Looking back, do you think it's despite the jobs and the investment—

Harold Martin: I—

Q: --it's been a failure?

Harold Martin: I-- Well, of course I haven't been down to Atlantic City in it must be ten, 12 years, maybe more, and it might be 20 years, and so I know how it's developed. How it's developed I'd like to see. I haven't seen that, but there's just- it's wrong to go in the direction of raising money from people who shouldn't be gambling. It's the wrong way to go, and part of that problem is that the public is at fault because they want to gamble. They would rather gamble than to pay taxes. That's the bottom line.

Q: How about the Pinelands?

Harold Martin: The Pinelands? Well, Brendan of course helped to save a lot of the Pinelands. He deserves the credit--

Q: But overall do you think the Pinelands has been successful?

Harold Martin: Well, I don't know because I haven't been down there recently either and I know that there's been some development. What it's like I don't know, but look. What you'd like to see and what you're going to see are two different things.

Q: I guess most significantly after all these years how do you see the success or failure of the school reform and state financing programs that started in the seventies and obviously have been tinkered with several times since you left the legislature?

Harold Martin: I'd like to think that we made some progress. Of course, we did make some progress by putting more money in. It's got to have some impact. I'm not prepared to give you any figures. I don't know the figures. I don't know how much- how the- how many benefits there have been. I know that we still have buildings that have to be replaced. I know that we have bathrooms that don't work. You read about it in the papers. My own feeling is that it's not money alone. I buy that argument. How you cope with it is another matter. I went to a high school as I told you earlier where we had 5000 students, and I think I got as good an education, maybe better, than some of the kids that are going to high schools where they may have 1200 students or 800. I think it's based upon the quality of the teachers and the willingness, the desire for learning, on the part of the students. If you don't have that I don't think you have anything. Yeah, sure, some kids need their bellies full before they go to school; no question about that and there are a lot of them. And now we're in a recession which may turn into a depression and every day you read about the homeless and the kids who are losing their homes. That's got to have an impact psychologically, let alone on their stomachs, and so it's a situation that's almost a vicious cycle.

Q: Going back to wrap up your Assembly career, how do you see the political situation in your district as you complete your third term?

Harold Martin: I would like to see a change. I think 30 years in the legislature's far too much, far too much. In the first place, I don't agree with him--Gerry Cardinale--and never have. He's at the opposite side of the political spectrum. The other legislator whose name I forget at the moment I don't think-- I think it's time for a change, which was my theme song in 1964 and the papers made a big deal of that like it was something new had been discovered, time for a change. At any rate, I think it's time for a change. I think that Cardinale--thirty years is too much. All he's doing is building up a pension which he probably doesn't need and I'd like to see a couple of Democrats-- The big problem is finding good people to run. We used to have a viable Democratic party. We don't have a Democratic party today and we haven't had for many years. People just are not coming forward and you can't find people. You try to get somebody and "No, no, no. I don't want to run."

Q: What do you attribute that to, a general negativity toward politics?

Harold Martin: Well, there's several-- Yes, that's one thing. Another thing: People have to make a living and our town has very wealthy people who live in mansions who in their spare time they travel or watch television or whatever, and so they don't want to be bothered. Politics takes a lot of time. I don't have to tell you that.

Q: What about the so-called reforms in ethics and financial disclosure? Has that kept some people out of the race who might be—

Harold Martin: Yeah--

Q: --quality candidates?

Harold Martin: Yeah, possibly. I don't know whether you can put the cart before the horse. You talk about reforms. We passed the public financing, reporting and all of that. I think a lot of these reports go in the dead file, someplace in Trenton or outside of Trenton. I don't know who- how many people-- Maybe some students here looked at them, maybe your opponent in an election may look at it, but I don't think people delve into that. I delved into it because I was interested but I don't know how many other legislators look at them, and as far as reforms are concerned-- You look at Congress-- If Congress can't reform itself, how do you expect the state of New Jersey to reform itself? <laughs>

Q: In your post assembly career, do you want to talk about some of your special interests both in the charities and nonprofits and others?

Harold Martin: Yeah. We contribute. I'm not a pauper as you know. By some standards I'm not a wealthy man. I'm not in Madoff's category and maybe that's great. <laughs> At any rate, we contribute substantially to Rutgers as you know and we contribute to hospitals and we've got some good hospitals that we contribute to.And we contribute to a whole raft of what we consider

worthy endeavors, but as far as my activity is concerned my wife drags me out of bed and gets me to go to exercise every day, which is good 'cause otherwise I think I'd vegetate and- or read the paper 20 hours a day. And I don't do a heck of a lot outside of exercise and read the papers or books or whatever. József Beck, current Harold H. Martin Professor of Mathematics at Rutgers University

Reba and Harold Martin (seated at center) with Rutgers graduate students awarded Harold and Reba Martin Fellowships supporting their work in government or political organizations, along with faculty and staff of the Eagleton Institute of Politics in 2009

Q: How about any family news or—

Harold Martin: Oh, yeah. Well, our family is increasing. As a matter of fact, while I'm talking to you here we may become grandparents for the eighth time—

Q: Congratulations.

Harold Martin: --so that's something that intrigues us. It may not intrigue us when we have to get down on the floor to play with them <laughs> if we can get up again. At any rate, we got-- What have we got? We got five boys and two girls and we're expecting another boy or so we're told. <laughs>

Q: Before we close, any final thoughts on New Jersey government, politics, governors you've known?

Harold Martin: Well, I'd like to see it more effective. I don't know how it can be. I wish I had the answer to that. I'd like to see more- a higher degree of ethics. Reading the papers sometimes can misleading. For example, Wayne Bryant-- I don't know him. I never met him. He was convicted and you know the story. Everybody knows the story. It's kind of a two-edged sword. I think that he meant well. He tried to bring money in to areas that needed money. Certainly, Rutgers needs money; Camden needs money; Newark needs money; the hospitals need money. It's a question of you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. He may have crossed the line. I'm not prepared to say that. I'm not a lawyer and I don't know all the ramifications of his case or any of the sort, and I'm not saying he should be absolved. I'm not saying that, but the thing that comes across to the public and to me as a reader is that it's crooked; it's crooked politics. That may not be true. There's a possibility it may not be true, but who's going to look at the fine print and who's going to make that decision?

<crew talk>

Harold Martin: She'll tell me that I spoke too long, which is probably true.

Q: I doubt that, but thank you.

Harold Martin: You're welcome, and thanks for your patience.

End of Harold Martin interview