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Joe Guidry (JG): This is Joe Guidry on March 29th, interviewing Governor Bob Martinez¹ at the Holland and Knight offices in downtown Tampa. Governor, I'd like to ask you first, when and where you were born and raised.

Robert Martinez (RM): I was born in Tampa, up in the West Tampa area; although we didn't call it that where we lived. We were near Tampa Bay Boulevard, which was dairy land back in those days. My neighborhood was sparsely populated with—most streets were dirt. It was during the Second World War, so everyone had gardens and cows and chickens. So it was a quasi-farm environment, seeing a lot of livestock and everyone planted their gardens because of food rationing². I think my grandfather, where I lived with my parents and my grandmother, probably, he planted about an acre and a half with all kinds of vegetables and hay for the cow and things of that sort. So I kind of grew up in that environment.

JG: Grew up in—

RM: Wonderful idyllic environment, it was just great. Not many kids. It was sparsely populated, so we had to hunt for other kids to play with.

¹Robert Martinez was Florida's 40th governor from 1987 to 1991. Prior to becoming Governor of Florida, he served as Mayor of Tampa from 1979 to 1976.

²In 1942, the Food Rationing Program began in order to avoid shortages and to also avoid only the wealthy being able to purchase commodities. Some foods were scarce while others did not require rationing. Rationed foods included sugar, meats, butter, fat and oils as well as canned, bottled, frozen fruits and vegetables, juices and dried beans and processed foods like soups, baby food and ketchup.

JG: And you were an only child?

RM: Only child.

JG: So that made it doubly—

RM: That made it more difficult, yeah. And so, I would say, within a six-block area, I may have five to seven kids of similar age, give or take a year, either way.

JG: It's hard to go knock on a door and say, "Can Tommy come out and play?" (both laugh)

RM: Yeah, that's right.

JG: Something like I used to do.

RM: And, of course, in those days, you were outdoors all the time too. And the few of us who were there were constantly outdoors. If there was radio, we didn't listen to it. So we were outdoor kids, you know, climbing trees and going to the river and—

JG: You were fairly close to the river there?

RM: Yeah, I was like a three-block walk, three blocks. I was on Ivy Street, and Armen—Howard stopped at Columbus Drive. So Armenia was the only north street to Tampa Bay Boulevard, and Armenia dead-ended at Tampa Bay Boulevard. It was dirt. Moving north, one of the members of my family had the Tamargo Dairy, where, today, Wellswood³ is, around where Tampa Catholic⁴ is?

JG: That's where I grew up.

RM: Alright, that's where the Tarmargo's had their dairy farm.

3A middle-class neighborhood in Tampa, Florida.

4A diocesan, Catholic, coeducational high school opened in 1962.

JG: That was where Tampa Catholic—yeah, I remember when it was a dairy, when I moved, too.

RM: Well, that was my family.

JG: Oh, really?

RM: Yeah. And then they sold that, and they moved out. And they changed the name to Sunnybrook, I believe; if I'm not mistaken. So we'd go out there periodically. So it was, really, as I said, a street car landed right in front of our house on Ivy Street, so that was our means of moving around. Particularly during the war, when gas was being rationed. So I have very fond memories of that period of my life.

JG: How long has your family been in Tampa?

RM: My grandparents got here somewhere between 1898 and 1910, I believe. I'm not exact on those numbers. They came from Spain.

JG: What brought them here?

RM: My guess is that the Spanish owned the cigar factories and they were probably recruiting. Although they came here, to my knowledge, none of them worked in the factories. My maternal grandfather worked in the phosphate mines for a period. His wife, my grandmother—the one went to 103, where I lived with my parents—did some domestic work and then just became a homemaker and had had five kids. So she just stayed at home. My other grandfather, my paternal grandfather, was a door-to-door salesman. Back then, a lot of things were sold door-to-door. And the other grandmother I never met. She died, I think, during childbirth or something like that, so I never met her. So I did know two of my grandparents real well. And, the other one, I knew as well, but I didn't live with him, so I didn't know him as well.

JG: And what did your father and mother do?

RM: My father was a Columbia⁵ restaurant waiter. He started at Rueben's restaurant on Tampa Street and Scott [Street]. That's where he learned. And the Columbia restaurant was holding a tryout for waiters. Back then everything was French service⁶, so he went and tried out and made the cut, and went to the Columbia in 1938. He stayed there to 1975, when I bought my uncle's restaurant, and he joined me to help me run it.

JG: Wow. And they call that sprint service where you had—

RM: French.

JG: French, oh.

RM: Yeah, from platter to plate.

JG: Oh, okay.

RM: Yeah, so you have to learn to use the utensils to make the—you would fillet at the table, skin fish at the table, that sort of thing, which is becoming a lost art. And my mother was a seamstress, and then she was a floor manager for Malzone⁷. She started with Tropical Garments over near Robel's Park⁸ and then moved over to Malzone, who was on Habana, sportswear. And that's where she ended her—she retired there.

JG: So she was a seamstress?

RM: Yeah.

JG: Where all have you lived in, in Tampa and Hillsborough since then?

⁵Founded in 1905 by a Cuban immigrant, the Columbia restaurant is the oldest continually operated restaurant in Florida and the oldest Spanish restaurant in the United States.

⁶The various parts of the meal are brought to the table at the same time and guests serve themselves from the main platter as opposed to dishes being brought out sequentially and served individually. In less formal restaurants, it is called family-style.

⁷Founded in 1936, Malzone Sports was later renamed Speedline Athletic Wear.

⁸A part of Tampa Heights and with City of Tampa limits. Robel's Park straddles Florida Avenue and Nebraska Avenue.

RM: I lived on 2523 Ivy Street. And then, when I got married, I was still in college but was working part time, and Mary-Jean was working. We had little house built in a vacant lot. My grandparents had bought the lot for a very reasonable price. We had our first house built there. That was in 19—I think we moved in there in 1956. Then, in 1970, I had the house built on San Jose Street in South Tampa and have been there ever since. So I've basically lived on two streets: Ivy Street there in West Tampa and San Jose Street.

JG: Man, you're like me. You don't move around.

RM: I don't move around. (JG laughs)

JG: Other than to Tallahassee and Washington.

RM: Yeah. Yeah. And to Illinois when I went to get my graduate degree. But, other than that, you know—

JG: And you got your degree at UT and then you got—

RM: The University of Tampa, bachelor of science. Then I went to the University of Illinois and got a master's there, in 1964, in labor and industrial relations. Taught a total seven years—three and a half, three and a half—because I interrupted it going to graduate school. While I was in high school, I was representing the—the Spanish restaurants had all been unionized, so I was representing some of the restaurants in the labor negotiations while I was still teaching at Chamberlain. And then, the teachers hired me in January of '66. So I left teaching altogether, went to the teacher's union and stayed there until '75. That's when I bought the restaurant.

JG: Before, you talked a little bit about how what it was like growing up there. But could you tell us what the natural area was like, growing up—?

RM: Yeah. Obviously, a lot of oak trees, hay. I can remember my grandfather with a scythe, a Spanish scythe, cutting down the hay for our cow, and we had a haystack, so. One of the funny stories that I'll never forget is when I was at Tampa Bay Boulevard, that's where I attended elementary school, and the school was technically in the county. And we lived barely inside the city in those days. The county line was Tampa Bay Boulevard itself. The school only had like 90 kids at that time. It was during the Second

World War. For most of the time I was in elementary school, the war was going on. And, in the third grade, you had to maintain the garden, learn to plant vegetables.

So, in the third grade, we're out there and, like, carrots and radishes and collard greens and whatever. And, finally, a carrot was sprouting through, and you could see it break the dirt. So, the next day, we go out there, and the carrot is missing. And the teacher got obsessed with this missing carrot. And she questioned—there was only 20 in every class back in those days, very small school. Questioned one by one: did you take the carrot? Nobody would admit it. If one of us did, no one admitted they did. So we each got a yardstick, three licks on account of that darned carrot (JG laughs) that had disappeared. And I have never forgotten that.

JG: Never found out the culprit?

RM: Nope. Never found out. Never found out to this day. And it's one of those—it dogged many of us. As a matter of fact, I don't really know another third grader that was with me, so I can't reminisce about that. But the point was that every child had to learn to that. Every Friday, we took in everything that was recyclable: tinfoil from the cigarette packs, you'd peel it off from the paper, rubber bands, newspapers. Every Friday, you'd load your bike with the all the recyclables to take to school. And there were prizes given, and, of course, there were US Bonds⁹ being sold. I think it was 10 cents a stamp, something like that.

I still had them when I got married. My mother finally gave them to me, these little war bonds. Of course, we were near MacDill—I mean Drew Fields¹⁰, so we would get a member of army there, every Friday to talk to us. It was a pep rally about the war. And they showed a war movie; every Friday, we saw a war movie there, in that little auditorium. And, of course, there was a speech by, typically it was a sergeant, a rah-rah speech about the war. Why we had to beat the Nazis and beat the Japanese.

And, of course, that's all you played; you played war games in those days. I've had age. The military people, the soldiers, would march in the neighborhood for training. And so you would see them walking on Armenia Avenue, up and down to Columbus Drive and going on the way back. Sometimes they'd have POWs walking behind them because—for whatever reason, we never knew why, as a kid. And, of course, I saw a couple of

⁹War bonds (debt securities) issued by the government to finance military operations and other war-time expenditures

¹⁰During WW2, Drew Field Municipal Airport was leased by the US government to supplement MacDill Army Field. Besides aircraft, antisubmarine units that searched for Nazi submarines in the Gulf of Mexico operated from this facility. In 1950, the field was returned to the city and became Tampa International Airport.

planes go down. Saw one on Douglas and Himes, a B-17 or 29. And then a P-51 fell right next to A.P. Boza Cemetery¹¹. So, as I said, those were very impressionable years. And there were no toys to be bought. Everything was going to the military, so kids just made up their own toys and played their own games. But, you know what? We just had a lot of fun in those days. Yeah. It was very safe to go wherever you wanted to go.

JG: Every place was a playground.

RM: Every place was a playground, tree climbing or—so I guess you could say I grew up with the environment, frankly. Yeah, when I walked down on Ivy Street to the river, it was nothing but a thicket of vines and trees.

JG: You told me once too, wasn't your first date with Mary Jane when y'all went crabbing, or among the first?

RM: No, we went swimming.

JG: Went swimming?

RM: Yeah. Back then, they didn't have spring break; seniors could get Friday off. The last Friday, school Friday. I think it was the last Friday. So we went over with two other couples to Clearwater Beach. So that was our very first date. That would be in 1953. Sometime in June because school didn't let out until sometime in early June. So it was sometime in early June.

JG: But y'all did go crabbing when, was that when—

RM: Oh, yeah. Later on, yeah. We fished. Our family hunted and fished a lot. I didn't do a lot of hunting. I stopped hunting in my late teens. But we continued fishing a lot. Of course, back then, you had to have these cypress boats. You know, engine upwards of five horsepower, then they got to 15. So it took forever to get to your destination. But one of our favorite places for trout and crabs was right outside the Westshore Hyatt. There were incredible flats out there. And we'd do a lot of night crabbing with a lantern and just walk on the flats—a lot of soft shell crabs when the moon was right. And so, we just tugged a 10-gallon, number 10 tub; tied a rope to your belt with some crab nets and somebody

11A.P. Boza leased portions of Marti-Colon Cemetery from the city. The cemetery is a historic cemetery south of Columbus Drive

holding a lantern. They were very docile, just didn't move at night. They were just sort of laying on top of the grass, and you just sort of scooped them.

JG: With a net?

RM: Yeah, with a crab net, uh-huh. We also did some there, just west of Rocky Point¹². I would say four or five blocks on the north side was terrific with a line of chicken necks. So any kind of bone meat, and just toss a line out there. Then you slowly—you could see when they tug. And you would slowly bring the line in, and the crabs still chomping away at the—you would just lift it and put it in the net. So those were the two ways we would get the crabs. We never had traps. You either walked to catch them, or you did it with a line.

JG: Let me ask you about your career here, too. The things you've done; (inaudible) a little bit. But, you know, you've had a very distinguished career. If you could kind of go over the things you've done. Started as a teacher.

RM: Right, started as a teacher, then went into labor relations, then the restaurant business. Then, while at the restaurant, I got appointed to SWFMD¹³, Southwest Florida Management District. So I served on the board while I was running the restaurant. Then got elected mayor, then governor, then drug czar, then came back home and been with Carlton, Fields, Holland and Knight¹⁴, where I am now.

JG: And your position at Holland and Knight—

RM: I'm senior policy advisor. And I chair the government advocacy task group for the firm in Florida. So I only do Florida work. I would say, 70% is government related, 30% is big companies in terms of my time allocation. Then I represent the firm at different events, and a lot of the promotional stuff for the firm I'm deeply involved with. Besides meeting with clients or providing counseling to clients that have never dealt with government, and they want to get an idea of how you deal with government and what are what are the things you can or can't do, the things of that sort. So I do a lot of that with the attorneys, as well.

¹²An area in Tampa Bay consisting of both areas within city limits and outside city limits of Tampa. It is connected to mainland Tampa by the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

¹³A regional agency of Southwest Florida responsible for planning and regulating the consumption of water resources, the use and protection of wetlands, and other water-related activities.

¹⁴A law firm founded in Tampa in 1889. Practice areas include: commercial litigation, federal and state taxation, intellectual property, labor and employment, land use and securities, and corporate finance.

My office is on the 39th floor here at the Regent's Bank building, so I can look around and see what I've done as a mayor. Some as governor but mostly as mayor. Whether it's a refuse-to-energy plant on the east side of our building or restorations of city hall, the convention center, the performing arts center. On a good day, I can see Picnic Island because I had that made into a park. It was just sitting there. You know, the Lowry Park Zoo¹⁵ as well. You know, for a governor you've got to travel around more to see some the things that you did.

JG: Pretty consequential.

RM: Yeah, we got the batter going by shrimping on the bay, the estuaries. You know, they used to shrimp in the estuaries, so of local impact here. And then SWIM¹⁶—the battle I had with SWIM, frankly, is that I wanted SWIM, but the legislature wanted to create a new agency for it. And I didn't want a new agency. I wanted the water management boards responsible. So finally I said, "It's either that way, or I'll veto whatever you send me." So we ended up getting a water management and including the estuaries because they didn't want any estuaries. They just wanted fresh water bodies.

JG: And that's been central to the Tampa Bay.

RM: It has been and to the whole(??) Florida Bay as well. It's been helpful to them.

JG: Well, now that we're kind of on to that, how did you first get involved with protecting the environment besides the—were you mayor before or—?

RM: Well now, we did, Bill Poe¹⁷ got the 90 percent money for the tertiary treatment plant. And then, when I came into office, it was operating, but had not gone through all the check-offs yet. And while there I decided that—the primary system was still operating through the initial treatment before it went to the tertiary. So, one the first things that I did was, you know, why are we letting all this methane gas go without its use? So we converted that, and the little primary plant there starts generating power as well, not just

¹⁵As mayor, Martinez helped to support and fundraise a \$20 million reconstruction of Lowry Park Zoo.

¹⁶In 1987, the Florida Legislature created the Surface Water Improvement and Management program (SWIM) as a mechanism to address nonpoint pollution concerns affecting at-risk water bodies in the state.

¹⁷Mayor of Tampa from 1974 to 1979.

—So then came the whole issue of selling TECO¹⁸ our excess power. We went into a long battle over them. We finally had to go to legislature, and the issue had to do with pricing of our output. So that was probably the first major one that I engaged in, which was to capture the methane at the tertiary treatment plant to generate power to run the primary treatment system that's out there and the excess sold to TECO. Then we did the refuse-to-energy plant as well. We retrofitted a beautiful—I don't know if you've ever been—have you been to the water treatment plant?

JG: Yes.

RM: I mean, that's a gorgeous building. We had it totally redone at that time as well, including restoring the building itself, not just the treatment system but the historical—

JG: Yeah, it's beautiful.

RM: So we did that. And then you know, on existing properties, it used to be, you could drive onto all of our parks and playgrounds. So one of the first things we did was put bollards¹⁹, so you couldn't get your cars on the property. So you wouldn't stress the green areas and frankly for the safety of people who were using the park. Because people would go there to fix their cars, paint their cars—not paint, but mechanics to work on cars. So I told Rose Ferlita²⁰, “Rose, I want bollards on all parks and playgrounds that don't have fences.” Because you know, otherwise you're running a risk that somebody is going to get hurt and plus it deteriorates the parks. I did a study on what to do with the wastewater. And of course, that and storm water, because I got to make storm water a utility.

But before I could actually engage in doing anything about that, that's when resigned to run for governor. The idea we had, frankly, with wastewater, was to see if it was feasible. A plan that I liked the most at that time to see if it was feasible, to backflow it to the green swamp, and let it get into the natural system and work its way back down to the river, rather than directly using it. Because people just would, generally, not want to use water they've just seen you treat directly. And so, that never got done. As I said, I resigned then. The other thing was the storm water; a system we were looking at was charging a fee for the amount of water that your property displaced into the public system. So the more hardened your property was, your fees would be greater, since

¹⁸Tampa Electric Company

¹⁹Thick, low post to which lines are attached.

²⁰Ferlita served as District Two, Citywide Tampa City Council Representative from April 1999 to November 2006.

you're discharging more water to the system. And that, as I said, I never got a chance to pursue, as I resigned to run—

JG: And that's been bone of contention ever since, I mean they have got the fee but it has never been—

RM: Yes, basically a flat fee. Yeah, of some kind, yeah. But, when I went to Tallahassee, I had legislation passed to make storm water a utility. Once you do that, it becomes bondable. Because the state was mute on that subject. It only had treated water and sewer, never storm water, so that's one of the pieces of legislation. You don't get much coverage on it, but we did make storm water, by law, a utility.

JG: Right and finding a possible funding source.

RM: Exactly. And then if you have a steady stream of money, you could bond it because it's considered a utility.

JG: Well, when you became governor, and you're known, you tend to your public's best interests, environmental accomplishments, among a number of other things. But was that your intent going in there, or did this sort of just materialize? You saw the opportunity and the need?

RM: Well, besides having grown up in the environment that I did, there was this constant battle, from SWFMD to mayor then to governor, the battle over property owners being denied the right to use their property because someone challenges the environmental value of the property. I always thought that was unfair was, as well, in terms of the way it was being pursued. So I said, "Well, if, in fact, the property is too sensitive for utilization, then the state or the government should pay and buy it." To have them pay taxes on an unusable piece of property, in my view, is not fair. It's like inverse condemnation. So that's really one of the things that led me to Preservation 2000²¹ as well; not only to acquire property that's sensitive and needed for water resource purposes or for wildlife, but also to be fair with those who owned those properties. To get them out of the ownership because they are not able to develop it, due to it not being able to get permitted. So my interest in environment and my interest in fairness, having to do property owners, is what led me to find to find a way to have a lot of money to do major projects.

²¹This program has been replaced by Florida Forever. Both Preservation 2000 and Florida First seek to acquire and protect both conservation and recreation lands. The State of Florida has purchased more than 718,126 acres of land with a little over \$2.9 billion.

JG: And that's where Preservation 2000—

RM: Yeah. And I think it's one reason, too, where there was a willingness for owners to sell because they knew they were never going to get permitted; or, if they did, they had such small uplands, it didn't make any sense. So that I thought that it—when I was there, I saw you in the department—back then it was the Department of Natural Resources. They had a little budget to buy land here and there. And then you have the name of the other fund that had a few dollars to buy. It was never—

JG: CARL²².

RM: Yeah, CARL. It never had much to do anything. It was always like remainder pieces or whatever. So I said, "At this rate, nothing can get done." So that's why I thought that Preservation 2000, which I further had concerns with because, I said, "You know, if you do an annual appropriation, it ain't going to work. Because it's going to be a battle, every year, about appropriation." So that's why I went with bonding. Using the growth of a doc stamps²³ to retire debt because you knew that the money was going to be there. And it was a 10-year program, and you knew that, every year, you could bond, based on the fact that you had growth in your doc stamps. So you wouldn't have the annual appropriations battle for the three hundred million. And once it stopped growing then, as you can tell—

JG: It's been hurt ever since.

RM: It's been hurting ever since.

JG: And it makes sense because the growth that was making the acquisitions necessary was helping pay—

RM: The debt service on it, yeah. You also had—on our pay-as-you-go, it's true you're not paid interest, but you're going to end up paying hiring prices because the land value keeps going up. And one of the things that I always have thought was fair about bonding is that, those who move here tomorrow help pay for it. On pay-as-you-go, only the person

²²The Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program was established by the Florida Legislature in 1979 to acquire lands of environmental and cultural significance. In 1989, the CARL program was replaced by Preservation 2000.

²³The Florida Documentary Stamp Tax, often called "doc stamp," is an excise tax imposed on certain documents executed, delivered, or recorded in Florida; some documents that are subject to the doc stamp are property deeds and mortgages.

who's there at that moment pays for it. So I always thought, like a mortgage on a house, that you get to use all of it, immediately because you have pledged to pay it over a period of time. Well, here, you buy the property immediately and preserve it because you are agreeing to pay for it over time. And that's why I thought this was the best way to go, to buy large pieces of land.

JG: Did you have much trouble persuading the legislature to go along with you?

RM: No. As I recall, there was no real battle about that. Back in those days, the Department of Natural Resources still was in place, so they were going to be in charge, and they answered the governing cabinet. As you know, [it] was a heavily Democratic state back then. So legislature liked to put as much as they could on the governing cabinet instead of the Republican governor. But that agency was there, and they're the ones that had been doing most of your land acquisition back in those days.

JG: Now, did you have any involvement with the ELAPP program on the county level?

RM: I was out of town, I think, at the time it passed from the legislature—

JG: When you were building Preservation 2000, was there some kind of relationship?

RM: No, not that I recall.

JG: It was just separate thing?

RM. Separate. Yeah.

JG: You recognized the need at the state level?

RM: At the state level, right.

JG: Of course, since then, the money from the state acquisition program has really leveraged ELAPP—

RM: It has, yeah. And they have changed some of its use now. Back then, it was mainly for acquisition, and now they've got maintenance as well, I think.

JG: Maintenance under the uh—

RM: I think so.

JG: —Florida Forever²⁴.

RM: Yeah. And, also, they've come in to buy small parcels like the Boatel, Garrison Channel, where the history museum is, the state had gotten that through Florida Forever. So its mission got altered somewhat, and, of course, lately, it's been on a diet. It hasn't had a lot of money to much with anything.

JG: No. Despite Amendment I. I don't know.

RM: Yeah.

JG: Do you see that changing despite that vote?

RM: I don't see anything on the horizon to bring about change. I mean I don't see any advocacy in large enough numbers by those who are serving in government. So, without that, I don't see how you can—

JG: Well, let me ask you, you're a conservative—

RM: You know, the other thing, too, is solid waste. There was no solid waste law in Florida. So, therefore, open dumping was not illegal, unless the county or the city decided. So that's what we did. The tires, the battery, requiring every—making illegal dumping illegal. Of course, the small counties did not like it. They thought the state was intruding, and requiring its residents who were living in rural environments to either take

²⁴Florida Forever is Florida's premier conservation and recreation lands acquisition program, a blueprint for conserving natural resources and renewing Florida's commitment to conserve the state's natural and cultural heritage. Florida Forever replaces Preservation 2000 (P2000), the largest public land acquisition program of its kind in the United States.

their garbage to a disposal area or the county having to provide it, whatever it was. That one was really the more controversial one that I got involved with.

JG: Was that small business operators just dumping batteries and tires?

RM: Yeah. And not so much that. It was in small counties, where they would just go to an open area and dump garbage. Well, that became prohibited and illegal. So that really, a lot of your small counties in the northeast and northwest, they really didn't like for the state to have done that. But there was no solid waste legislation in Florida.

JG: Let me ask you, I mean, because you are a conservative Republican, yet you saw the importance of protecting the environment, buying land, preserving it. You saw that as a conservative—

RM: But, you know what? I think being an urban mayor, where you have constant litter issues. You've got to clean up; graffiti you've got to clean up; you've got garbage you've got to pick up; you've got storm water you've got to deal with. You develop one hell of an environmental agenda, just to make the cities livable. So I think you take that with you because you know how expensive it is. And, if you allow it to spread, the cost of later is horrendous. So I think, you know, had I not served on the SWFWMD board, had I not been a mayor of a large city, I'm not sure I would have carried that kind of a mission with me. You know, because I have basically 12 years, almost 12, of dealing with urban environment. Or, in the case of SWFWMD, it was rural more than urban. So I think there was just a learning platform on the issues.

JG: Where there any other people who were particularly helpful to you or influential on the environmental front?

RM: Yeah. Curt Kiser²⁵, you know, obviously, was a strong—still is—environmentalist. And Ron Richmond²⁶, if my memory serves me right. Gosh, there's so many of these names, you just start forgetting them. Although they were a minority, I mean, a real minority in the legislature. I don't think we had a third in the house, if I'm not mistaken.

²⁵Curtis "Curt" Kiser represented Pinellas County in the Florida Legislature from 1972 to 1994 as a member of the Republican Party. He was General Counsel of the Florida Public Service Commission from 2009 to 2014 and served on the Public Service Commission Nominating Council for 17 years with three terms as Chair.

²⁶Ronald R. "Ron" Richmond served in the Florida House of Representatives for the 49th district from 1972 to 1984 as a member of the Republican Party; he was the house minority leader from 1982 to 1984.

JG: But it was the Republicans, back then, who actually—Curt Kiser was a Republican.

RM: Yeah. He was a Republican. But, on environmental issues, it was—I found it pretty bipartisan. Although, then, sometimes with governance, like the battle with SWIM, that they wanted to create a new agency to do that, and I opposed it. And, obviously, I had a good coalition in the senate, so they couldn't override me. If I vetoed it, it was going to stay vetoed. So they knew that. (inaudible) When kind of resolve a lot of issues, and that was one of those at the very end. They relented that there wouldn't be a special agency.

JG: That would have probably diverted a lot of money to administration and so forth.

RM: Yeah, exactly right. Not only that; I thought, then, the legislature would dabble more. This way, the districts would be doing it and the legislature wouldn't directly be able to—

JG: Are you pretty proud of the way things have turned out?

RM: I think they've purchased massive, beautiful properties that would have probably—who knows what would have happened by now? And I think, you know, you lose track; it's been a long time ago. But I thought the purchasing system the state had, the appraisal system it had, the negotiations that they did, that they got good value for the properties they bought.

JG: You also had a reputation of being strong on growth management in making sure that the growth did occur responsibly. That's kind of gone by the wayside in years since.

RM: Yeah. You know, it was a freshwater and a saltwater program, both. You know, I did the fishing license as well. Florida didn't have a fishing license [for] saltwater. Before the governing cabinet, we brought forth the coastal boundaries that you could build on. The state didn't have any. So we had hearings for the entire state. The governing cabinet just set the setback from the high-water mark, statewide. Although, those are all kind of bureaucratic sounding. So, you know, but the truth of the matter; it was done individually before. So if you had clout, you got close to the water. So now, you would have to go seek an exception to what the state setback was, instead of the other way around. And so, you know, it probably took a couple of years. You know, that you would do segments. But that, again was a good bipartisan—by then, most of the time, we had two Republican cabinet members and four Democrats. But I think that was worthwhile to do, not only for the property owner who ends up house in the fricken' [sic] gulf or Atlantic because they built too close, when a hurricane comes along. But I thought it was also for coastal

protection, whether it was for the sand dunes or the turtles or whatever else. And then you had the whole growth management issue. It passed in '86, but it fell to us to implement it.

JG: And you had Tom Pello(??)—

RM: Tom Pello and, again, the small counties were very concerned about the state coming in and telling them that they would need a land-use plan.

JG: But you all stuck to your guns.

RM: Stuck to our guns and did it, yeah. And that's gone down I think, yeah. Pretty much. It's up to the counties and cities. Maybe, as it matured and the counties and cities took on more responsible positions, maybe it isn't needed anymore. I don't know. But—

JG: Well, if nothing else, the fact that you had it there during those pivotal years, it had—

RM: Yeah, I had—

JG: —and they did have to have a growth plans. Now they still have to have growth plans.

RM: But now, it's become more of a way of life. And I think that developers have changed, too. I think that developers have learned that, if you can build and not build natural resources and damage them, that it adds value to their upland development, instead of mowing down and filling. I think there was a period when they didn't think that way. But I think, now, for the last two or three decades, that all your responsible developers know the value that it brings to their property to have nearby wooded areas and swamp areas and our natural system. I think there was time when that wasn't the case.

JG: Now, I know you've had some of a relationship with ELAPP.

RM: Yeah, I co-chaired with Jan Platt²⁷ the renewal, yeah.

²⁷An interview with Jan Platt, who formerly served as Hillsborough County Commissioner and a member of the Tampa Bay City Council, is available as part of the ELAPP Oral History Project collection.

JG: And you're a supporter of it. I mean—

RM: Yeah, it's a wonderful program—

JG: —level of the approach you took.

RM: It's a great program. I've been to a number of the parks. And they've done a great job of acquiring the property. They've done a fantastic job maintaining the properties. I know, when—I think it was up for reenactment in 2008, I think, or '10? It was during or after the collapse of our construction industry. And, even during that period, where you had high unemployment and low development. I believe they got a 70-some-odd percent or 80-some-odd percent for renewal. So, clearly, the people of Hillsborough County strongly support it.

JG: Do you see anything, now, that you would like to see changed or evolved in our land conservation efforts in the state or local level?

RM: Well, you know, they've been working on it. I don't know how much they've been able to do lately. But you know, the connecting the—

JG: Wildlife corridor.

RM: Wildlife corridor, which is not easy to do as you urbanize. But I think it remains a worthy thing to pursue. I think what they did to it—and what is it? Buying the property rights instead of the property itself—the development rights—I think that was pretty smart, not having to pay as much for land, when the land owner gives up development rights, so they can continue to own it and use it but in a passive way or in an agricultural way; I think that was smart. That stretches your money farther.

JG: Do you know why the Republican Party, which used to be so good on the environmental issues, now seems antagonists to so many people? Tallahassee now doesn't seem to have, with some exceptions, notable—

RM: Yeah. I don't know. Moving a little bit on the political side, it would be, I think, that so many of the advocates on the environmental side are also—it's perceived by Republicans—that they are so deeply rooted in the Democratic Party. And, I think, to that

degree, their message may not be listened to as much. Because they're perceived to be, first, part of the Democratic Party process, and environmental happens to be one of their things. So I don't know how you overcome that. I think it was true, back then, when I was in public life; there always is that perception. That you're part of the Democratic party; organized environmental groups is what I am referring to, basically. It may or may not be true, but that's the perception that exists.

JG: It's also true under your administration, which was very strong on the environment, and Claude Kirk²⁸, actually was pretty good for his time. Democrats were good.

RM: Yeah, and Jeb kept it up with Florida Forever. And, sometimes, I guess the state got on a pretty strict monetary diet when we had the 2008 crash. And then, money clearly gets moved around more for human services and safety than for other things. And it hasn't even made a comeback from that period because that's probably, when you go back and look, that's probably when they got no money, basically, since the money was being redistributed for things like schools, and healthcare, and whatever else to make the numbers work. Now that the economy has gone healthy again, it has not gotten its appropriations back again.

JG: Well, is there anything that worries you on the environmental front, now, with Florida?

RM: No. The water will always be an issue. And, talking with political friends from other parts of the state, I always say, "You know, there's more and more studies constantly being financed about how to deal with water resources, for potable use, for environmental utilization." I say, "You know, why don't you all take a look at Tampa Bay Water²⁹?" That's the only region of the state, the only area that I know of that there's a collective group of cities and counties that now have a wholesale way of distributing water to its retail users. And they have study after study on how it is that they are going to be able deal with the stress of the water system, particularly during dry periods, like we are in one right now.

And I think that Tampa Bay Water is a model, in terms of how it's functioning. All of the governments turn over the wells systems to Tampa Bay Water. The City of Tampa continues to run the river system. But rest of it is being operated by Tampa Bay Water. And so, they are the producers and wholesalers. And it's all the water to the cities and

²⁸Claude Roy Kirk Jr. (1926 – 2001) was the 36th governor of Florida.

²⁹Tampa Bay Water is a regional wholesale drinking water utility that serves the greater Tampa Bay area; it replaced the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority, which was created in 1998 to deliver drinking water in an environmentally sound, cost-effective, and reliable manner.

counties, and they retail it to their customers. And the whole system was being managed between reservoir, wells or river. And, it would seem to me, that this would be a model in the urban areas that are having difficulty in managing water resources. So I see that as an issue that will be there for the foreseeable future.

It's the kind of thing that disappears when you have wet periods, and the aquifer is high, and the lakes are high, and everything. And it sort of disappears as an issue. And then, you get into the dry season or a dry period and, you know, your wells are working harder, and your aquifers begin to drop, and your lake levels begin to drop. And, all of a sudden, it becomes an issue again. And so, I don't know how many studies they've done on this, but not much has happened in that area. I think there's been great improvement in wastewater discharges.

Storm water won't be an issue because it's just very hard to collect enough money. And citizens don't have equal need. Everybody needs water. Everybody needs waste water to be taken. But if you live in a higher elevation—I live in South Tampa, I'm lower elevation. But if you live in a higher elevation, you don't know why you ought to be paying some tax, when I don't get to use it. So it's always a more difficult thing, politically, to engage in storm water utility, than it is in water and sewer, where there is an even use [and] even need for it. So, if you don't live on the corner of Henderson and Dale Mabry and Neptune, you may not see the need for an increase utility cost for storm water.

JG: Well, is there anything else that I should have asked, that I didn't ask?

RM: No, I think we've got a great conversation. I'm sure, as you continue to talk, more things come to mind.

JG: I think you've been great covering all—

RM: Yeah, those were the major things. You know, you have the (inaudible) like manatee protection, and dolphin protection. Yeah, that's one of the things that I didn't even realize. When I got elected governor, I didn't even realize that dolphins weren't protected. And so, I get up one day, and picked up—you know, back then, everything was newspapers. There was nothing, no Internet. So I see that there were some trappers. I think they were down in Florida Bay, trapping dolphins for some aquarium in either New Jersey or New York, so I called from the mansion.

I think I called Florida Marine Patrol and said, "Well what's this trapping of our dolphins?" And he says, "Well, there's no law dealing with that." So one of the orders

was to sign an executive order; they needed an executive order to make it unlawful to trap dolphins in Florida waters, which meant 10 miles in the gulf and three miles in the Atlantic. And I immediately sent the Florida Marine Patrol to take the dolphins back. (JG laughs) And freed them. And then, I think we had a law passed that, in Florida waters, no dolphin may be trapped. And, of course, spreading the manatee zones and enforcing it. Because there were some zones without any enforcement. So, the governing cabinet, we continued to expand the manatee zones. And as I recall, we added more marine patrols for greater enforcement.

JG: Anything else?

RM: That's about it.

JG: Alright, well that's great.

RM: How about lunch?

end of transcript