

Adele Johnson
Narrator

Bill Jones
Interviewer

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BJ: Okay, this is Friday morning, November 18th, and I am Bill Jones, and I am interviewing Adele Johnson. And Adele, I think what we'd like to hear first from you is just a brief sketch of your life so that we have some basic biographical details to start with.

AJ: Okay, well then I was born in Casselton, North Dakota, lived all over North Dakota, really. And hmmm, wound up eventually in Fargo, where I went to high school, and we lived there while I was in college as well. I graduated from Moorhead State with a...at that time it was a bachelor of education degree. Hmmm...

BJ: That's all they offered, I think, at that time, wasn't it?

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And taught for a year in Akeley, Minnesota, and then moved to Battle Lake. And was back in Fargo...hmmm...teaching first privately, and then at Concordia Conservatory, and then I taught at Moorhead State. And hmmm...and we lived in Colorado after we were married, and came back to Minnesota. Not that we wanted to, especially, but we had a child with a dust allergy who couldn't stand living there.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And lived in Moorhead for, oh, almost...or around Moorhead for almost thirty years then. And after we retired, moved down to Otter Tail County, live on...Lake Lida [at Pelican Rapids] there.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. Hmmm...let's...let's talk about your first teaching in a high school situation. You taught music then? That...?

AJ: No, I taught English.

BJ: Oh, you taught English.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: So your bachelor's degree was...was it a general degree or a degree in English?

AJ: Well, I had two majors, English and French.

BJ: English and French.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Okay. So this...music preparation was kind of on the side.

AJ: Yeah. And...

BJ: A little...an extra.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: I had some very excellent teachers.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Esther Temple from Fargo. I don't know if you know that name.

BJ: No.

AJ: In high school. And...hmmm...[Sighs] And there was a teacher called Bertha Hagen who divided her time between Fargo and New York City. And when she was in Fargo I worked with her.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And then at the University of Michigan, I worked with Joe Brinkman. And...but it was always aside from whatever I was doing academically. [Chuckles]

BJ: I see. And so those...at at both Akeley and Battle Lake, you were teaching English then?

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Hmmm. And do you remember the curricula that you followed?

AJ: Yeah, it was state-prescribed at the time.

BJ: Okay.

AJ: Yeah, so many...

BJ: Which dictated...

AJ: So much time to this...you know, like drama, so much time to grammar, and so much time to spelling.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And so on and so forth.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And you taught the whole range of high schoolers?

AJ: Right, everything.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah, and then you moved to the big city, or back to the big city then.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. [Laughs] And...but then you began to teach privately in...

AJ: Piano.

BJ: ...in private lessons in piano.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm. And how much did you charge for a lesson in those times?

AJ: Hmmm. Well, I can't really remember. Ah, it wasn't much to start with, probably a dollar and a half.

BJ: [Laughs]

AJ: Hmmm...and by the time I quit, I was getting ten dollars a lesson.

BJ: Uh huh. Mmmm-hmmm. And your students were largely children or...a range?

AJ: To start with.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: But, you know, once I moved to Concordia and MS [Moorhead State], it was college-aged students.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And...now the Concordia Conservatory, we haven't...I don't believe we've interviewed anybody who has had a relationship with that Conservatory. I think that might be worth exploring a little bit. Hmmm. How did that operate? It...well, were you formally a member of the Concordia College faculty? Could students gain credit from their study with a member of the Concordia Conservatory faculty?

AJ: Well, yes, some of them did at any rate.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: I...I don't know if that was true of the whole staff, but...

BJ: I see. Ah...now they had studios other than on the campus, too.

AJ: Right. It was in Fargo over the Daveau Music Company, what's now Schmitt's.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: That's where the Conservatory was. But hmmm...there were also Conservatory studios available on campus once the Knutson [Campus] Center was built.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Oh, yes. Hmmm. And then at Moorhead State, you taught piano there, too.

AJ: Right.

BJ: That's right. And then you did...How about performing? Were you active in that?

AJ: Oh, very. Mmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: It was...

BJ: As a soloist, as a...?

AJ: Both.

BJ: And accompanist.

AJ: It was...hmmm...you know, for...for quite a period, I was the only one in town, so...[Chuckles]

BJ: Who really played then?

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: And so if anybody needed an accompanist or any...some...

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: They called you. Yeah. Did you make that a professional thing? That is, did you get paid? Or were...?

AJ: Yes.

BJ: Yes. Okay. Hmmm. And what could an accompanist expect to be paid?

AJ: I don't even remember. Not a lot.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But that was a part of your professional career.

AJ: Right.

BJ: You were earning your living teaching and playing.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm.

BJ: Which is...not an easy thing to do.

AJ: No. No.

BJ: Yes. Yeah, it wasn't then either, I'm sure.

AJ: No.

BJ: Yeah. It isn't now, that's for sure. Hmmm. And did you...? Do you remember some of the people that you accompanied?

AJ: Well, locally, hmmm...I played with Sig Thompson, and we did lots of chamber music.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Of various combinations. Ah, whoever was heading the violin department at Concordia...I...of the...

BJ: See, I remember Thomas Hibbard, for example.

AJ: Right. Tom.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Tom and I did several recitals together.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And hmmm...hmmm...Bert McGarrity from...

BJ: Moorhead State.

AJ: ...Moorhead State and I did lots of things together. And he and Elaine Kjerstad, who taught violin at Concordia, and I did a lot together.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And hmmm...I hmmm...did almost all of Peg Keeseey's[sp?] accompanying. Hmmm...her...

BJ: Including studio or as teaching?

AJ: Ah, no, not actually.

BJ: No.

AJ: Just recital work.

BJ: No, just recitals. Yeah.

AJ: And of course, while Peg was still singing, then she and I worked together.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. You know, we talked about this just before we began the tape, and you said you were doing this while I was a student at Concordia. And it is coming...and I didn't remember this! It's coming *back* to me now! [Laughs]

AJ: Yeah.

BJ: I *do* remember now that you were very much on the scene.

AJ: Mmmm.

BJ: And...and somehow or other, hmmm...Concordia's two piano teachers...well, three piano teachers when I was there, Berghold Torvik[sp?] and Clara Duea and then Paul Christiansen.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: And none of the three of them did much playing.

AJ: No. No.

BJ: Ah, and so clearly you were a [chuckles] valuable asset on...on the musical scene. Hmmm. And you were...did you actually do MS and Concordia both during this period of time?

AJ: Not at the same time.

BJ: Not at the same time.

AJ: No, I...

BJ: When you left the Concordia Conservatory...

AJ: ...left Concordia and went to Moorhead State.

BJ: I see. And how long were you associated with Moorhead State?

AJ: Oh...[Sighs] Close to ten years, it was.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. And again, you were a member of the music department faculty then.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And your teaching responsibility was primarily piano?

AJ: Mmmm.

BJ: Or exclusively piano?

AJ: Well, there were a few organ students, which I had to handle.

BJ: Oh, yes.

AJ: Though I wasn't really much interested in it or very well equipped to do it.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. But nobody else was around to do it?

AJ: No.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: And there wasn't a real organ there, so it didn't make too much difference.

BJ: [Chuckles] Yeah. Okay. Hmm...hmm...and after your teaching at Moorhead State, then you retired from teaching? Or did you continue...?

AJ: No, well, we...we left for Colorado.

BJ: Okay.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Okay. Alright. And then upon your return, did you resume your teaching again?

AJ: Hmm, a little bit.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Not...and that was purely private work.

BJ: I see.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: I see. Hmm. Now I...and my first acquaintance with you was as a superintendent of the Sunday School of the First Congregational Church! [Laughs]

AJ: [Laughs]

BJ: I presume you were active in various community affairs, too, such as church affairs and that sort of thing.

AJ: Right. And hmm...oh, I was on the Symphony Board way back when.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Ah, worked with the YWCA. Hmm...and after we came back I was involved with Volunteers for Community Service.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Served on that board for a long time. And I was also the board of the Community Action Council, they...hmmm...Clay-Wilkin, and on the first board of the Great Plains Food Bank.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. So, obviously, what happened is that you became more and more involved in various community service activities.

AJ: Yes.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Right now I'm involved in Pelican Rapids, too, and treasurer of the Food Shelf.

BJ: Is that right?

AJ: Yeah.

BJ: Okay. Hmmm. About when did your activity begin in that...in that kind of arena?

AJ: Well, the YWCA goes way, way back to when we were in Fargo.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. And hmmm, for example, this...hmmm...hmmm...the Volunteer Service, hmmm...what was it now? I...I can't...

AJ: Volunteers for Community Service.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Ah, that's a relatively new organization, isn't it?

AJ: Mmmm. Well, yes, relatively new, but it's...oh, I think it was maybe the second or third year that Margaret...Margaret Reed was here, that...that she got that started.

BJ: Okay, which would be in the late 1960s, I guess, something like that.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Right.

BJ: Yeah. Hmmm. As you look over *that* particular scene in this community, what kind of trends did you see? Were there any trends that you saw as far as this community, its needs, the agencies to meet those needs?

AJ: Mmmm. Well, of course the needs increased all the time. And it took quite a while for the community to acknowledge that there were any needs. And hmmm...and I must say, I remember an awful lot of turf protection, and the struggle within United Way to hmmm...for money, power, I suppose, at the same time.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Ah, in other words, at least some of the community attitudes, could they be described as, well, we don't have those kind of problems, and just...?

AJ: Oh, definitely.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: Yeah, it was the best of all possible worlds was right here.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: And nobody was supposed to upset any apple carts.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. It was a very comfortable thing if you could keep your head deep enough in the sand.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Hmmm, when did you start getting involved in politics?

AJ: Well, actively in the 1960s, but hmmm...we were also involved in a way in Colorado when we lived there.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: But not in any organized way, we...Hmmm. I started first thinking about it when I was in high school. We lived across the street from a perfectly marvelous man named Ballou. He was a Unitarian minister in Fargo, had come from New England, of course. And he had two very good friends whom I was fortunate enough to meet, because we lived across the street from him. That was Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. [Transcriber's note: both were well-known socialists.]

BJ: Is that right?

AJ: Right.

BJ: The, ah...

AJ: And the...well...

BJ: The grand old men of socialism! Right.

AJ: And ah, they spent, you know, some time in Fargo visiting Henry. And...and I would hmmm...get a chance to go over there and sit in a corner and listen to them. And...and...it was marvelous. So, hmmm, you know, I was a thoroughgoing socialist, to start with.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Ah, would you like to hear about the first time I voted for President?

BJ: Yes! [Laughs]

AJ: I was in Battle Lake, teaching. First year I was in Battle Lake. And I can't even remember what Republican was running, but...And I remember there were four votes for Roosevelt, and a couple of hundred for whoever the Republican was, and there was one vote for Norman Thomas.

BJ: [Laughs]

AJ: And I was scared all year that somebody would find out who it was!

BJ: [Laughs]

AJ: [Laughs]

BJ: Well, I have a confession to make. The first two or three times that I voted, I was so disaffected with both major party candidates, that I voted Norman Thomas just as a...a kind of protest.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Ah, I could not...I was not a socialist.[Chuckles] But nevertheless, I thought, well, this is a responsible person anyway.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: And I wasn't very pleased with what was happening. Hmmm. As...well, that's...that's interesting. Hmmm. And what a privilege, really, to have met those two...two persons.

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Hmmm. Then you...as far as your political career, you started to get more active then in the...in the 1960s?

AJ: In the 1960s, right.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. And you identified with what party?

AJ: With the Democratic Party.

BJ: [Laughs] Okay. And...why?

AJ: Well, because it was the closest I could come to, hmmm...to...So I mean the Socialist Party had definitely changed by that time, it was no longer the party of Norman Thomas.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And I wasn't interested in...in frittering away any time on what was a vain endeavor.

BJ: And a lost cause. Right.

AJ: And so we got heavily involved in the Democratic Farm and Labor Party.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And what...what appealed to you? You said they have...like they...they held to some of the same ideals that you had experienced.

AJ: Well and what...what appealed to me was that it seemed to me it was the party that was willing to do things for people who couldn't do things for themselves.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. Now your involvement...your first involvement was as a...as a what?

AJ: Hmmm, well, a precinct caucus attendee.

BJ: Okay. [Chuckles]

AJ: [Chuckles] And we were from a country precinct or rural precinct, had no problems getting on...elected to go on to the county convention.

BJ: Sure.

AJ: And hmmm...oh, those were exciting days, the...at least in the DFL. You know, half the convention would disappear and go and meet someplace else and...

BJ: Have a rump session, is that it?

AJ: Yeah, right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: And...

BJ: What would be the issue that would divide them? That would cause them to...?

AJ: Hmmm. Well, hmmm, fair representation, let's say, or at least what they thought would be fair. It was before any of the so-called reforms had been taken, and the party was still operating on a winner-take-all basis.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And hmmm...there were...a lot of divisions then.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Ah, Democrats have always had a...an outstanding ability to be divisive anyway.

AJ: Right.

BJ: [Laughs]

AJ: Well, and the reforms have done nothing to get rid of that. In fact, they have...*increased* the chances to be divisive.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And ineffective.

BJ: Hmmm, what particular reforms are you...are we talking about now?

AJ: Oh, I'm talking about things like the walking sub-caucus.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And proportional representation. And I don't have anything...any quarrel with proportional representation. But I do have a quarrel with a device like the walking sub-caucus, which is...you know, by its very nature divides the party.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Physically.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: And hmmm...doesn't make for good feelings all the way around.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Well, you...you started to attend the county conventions.

AJ: Right.

BJ: And then what was your next role that you began to assume?

AJ: Well, within the party Ray was doing far more than I was. But I was a member of the DFL...charter member of the DFL Feminist Caucus.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And the Women's Political Caucus, and was, you know, involved on a state level, really, more than I was on the local level.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: But, you know, gradually got more and more involved locally. And in...[Sighs] Well, I...I did work for Bob Bergland. And...

BJ: Okay, so you were a campaign worker? Or did you have...?

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: Hmmm.

BJ: Well, were you a paid campaign worker or were you a volunteer?

AJ: No, not until I ran Keith Langseth's first campaign.

BJ: Okay.

AJ: That was the first time I ever was paid for that.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Ah, so Bob Bergland was the first particular candidate where you had some formal responsibilities.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm, now he was a Seventh District Congressman for how many terms?

AJ: Hmmm...let's see, from...not very long. From seventy...I can't remember when he was first elected. 1970, I think, when...

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And then, of course, in 1976 he moved out to...

BJ: To Secretary of Agriculture.

AJ: ...become Secretary of Agriculture.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Had the Seventh District been served by a DFL congressman prior to Bergland, too?

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Coya Knutson.

BJ: Okay.

AJ: That...that was when it was still the Ninth District, before reapportionment.

BJ: I see. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Well, Bergland, of course, became a national figure. And obviously, you got to know him very well.

AJ: Very well.

BJ: Yeah. Hmmm. Do you still keep in touch with him?

AJ: Oh...well, we run into each other.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah.

AJ: And have a chance to talk every once in a while.

BJ: Yes. Yeah. What other national figures or figures of significance have you had contact with and that you have some memories of?

AJ: Well, Hubert Humphrey, of course.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Hmmm, and...I've known the Mondale's.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Hmmm...I was a delegate to the first mid-term conference of the Democratic Party in Kansas City back in...1973 that must have been.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Ah, 1974. And had a chance to meet many national figures then. I remember talking with Averell Harriman and Claiborne Pell, Ed Muskie, and that was a great experience, far better than attending a national convention, I'm sure.

BJ: You never did go as a national delegate?

AJ: No, never wanted to.

BJ: You thought that was a...kind of an exercise in futility, did you?

AJ: Yes. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. Let's go back to that Feminist Caucus. Hmmm. When was that?

AJ: Oh...I'm not really good on dates. But it...it got started sometime around 1970, I would say.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Hmmm.

BJ: Fairly early then, actually.

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: As far as the Feminist Movement is concerned. Yeah.

AJ: Yeah. In fact, it was started to work on this business of better representation of everybody in the party. And hmmm...by the time of that first midterm conference, oh, had gotten a fair amount of shreds of power into its hands.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And was really having an effect in Minnesota.

BJ: Was their role major as far as establishing the various expectations of equal representation as far as gender within...?

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. Which, hmmm, as near as I can see...Now, I'm...I guess my...I can't really speak, but I was quite struck, let's put it that way, when I came here and became involved a little bit, to see how...how quite rigidly that was applied, you know.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: I mean that was a party distinctive.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. And the Feminist Caucus had a major role in that.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Any other issues that they spoke out on that made an impact?

AJ: Hmmm...well, certainly, they were in the thick of the struggle over abortion, and still are. All of the Feminist Caucus doesn't...wield the same kind of power that it did then.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: It's gotten more diffuse. And I have...have long since resigned from it.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Because once it got itself involved in supporting an unendorsed candidate, I didn't want to have anything to do with it.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Hmmm. You obviously have strong feelings about party loyalty then.

AJ: You know, I...hmmm...I am nothing but a Democrat now. I don't belong to any splinter group within the party.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. And why is that? Why...why that?

AJ: Well, I am in politics to make a change, you know, to try to make things better than they were before. And if you don't win elections, you can't do that. And hmmm...I see all this splinter activity as keeping us from losing elections.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Or from...from winning elections.

BJ: Yeah, from winning. Mmmm-hmmm. Yeah.

AJ: So I don't...don't have much...many kind thoughts for...

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. For the Polly Mann type of...of candidacy.

AJ: Right. Or the...all the caucuses within the DFL. There is a Feminist Caucus, there's a Pro-Life Caucus, there's a Black Caucus, there is...

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And the list is...well, it's not endless, but it's way too long.

BJ: Yeah. Hmmm...that's...that's interesting. How does your belief that party unity is a...should be the ultimate goal...simply because that's the only way the party can be effective, I guess that's...?

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Ah, and I think it's the only way we can attract candidates that we really want to work for.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Now as you look back...clearly, the Kansas City Conference is a rare...very important, and it's a...

AJ: It was a great experience.

BJ: ...great experience. What are some of the other more interesting, or vivid, or memorable experiences as far as politics is concerned that you can recall?

AJ: Well, hmmm...I was Seventh District Associate Chair for two terms. Bob Ervin[sp?] from Detroit Lakes was chair at the time.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: That, hmmm, was a lot of fun. A lot of work, but hmmm...

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: It was...it spanned the time when Bob Bergland was still congressman and...and when he wasn't. Ah, it was a lot more fun with an incumbent than it has been since.

BJ: Yes.

AJ: Hmmm...several state conventions were good experiences, and some were...were not such good experiences. Hmmm. There's always a certain amount of fun out of these political gatherings.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: That hmmm...and well, I think, you know, we did make some important strides along the way, but...that comes and goes, too, ups and downs.

BJ: Yes. Yes. And in the Seventh District, it's a...it's *gone* pretty much. [Laughs]

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: For quite a long while now.

AJ: Right.

BJ: And...hmmm...as...now you were particularly involved in Clay County for years. You're now in Otter Tail County.

AJ: Right.

BJ: But Clay County was your bailiwick for a long time. As you look at Clay County party politics, hmmm, what have been the trends during the last twenty years of your involvement as you might identify them?

AJ: Well, to start with, Clay County was, hmmm, not much better than Otter Tail County when it came to nurturing Democrats. It was a heavily Republican county, still is a Republican county for the most part. But, hmmm...I think when the county party is able to maintain a presence, you know, countywide, if there are people working that their neighbors can see, it...it helps. Hmmm, while Ray was county chair, we elected Keith and Dave the first time that the Democrats had ever sent anybody to the Minnesota State Legislature.

BJ: Is that right?

AJ: Right.

BJ: Both of them were firsts?

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Is that right?

AJ: And hmmm...

BJ: Now this is Keith Langseth and...

AJ: Dave Beauchamp.

BJ: ...Dave Beauchamp.

AJ: Right.

BJ: To get them on the tape! [Laughs]

AJ: Okay.

BJ: Right.

AJ: And...then, of course, they've...they both served two terms and then were defeated in 1978, the year that...that everything went down the tube. Hmmm...somewhat the same sort of campaign that the Republicans ran this year, 1988, and were able to defeat a lot of DFL incumbents, which didn't happen in 1988, thank goodness. Hmmm...and then two years later, Keith came back and ran for the Senate.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And was successful, and...and now in the next Legislature, Clay will have three, all it can send to the State Legislature.

BJ: That's right. A hundred percent.

AJ: So that's...that's pretty impressive.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Hmmm. Well, some other interesting things that show what a working party can do is that when Warren Spannaus ran for governor, hmmm, Clay was one of the few counties that carried for Warren during the primary. It was one of the few counties that carried for...one of the few rural counties out here that carried for Don Fraser when he ran for Senate.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: I mean, it is possible for...for a party to carry for an endorsed candidate, if only it does the work it's supposed to do.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Yes, and both very good candidates. And I've forgotten now, who...is that what...? Did [Al] Quie come in over Spannaus? Was that...?

AJ: No, [Rudy] Perpich.

BJ: Oh!

AJ: In the primary.

BJ: Oh, this was the primary.

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Yep. Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm. In Fraser's case, it was short.

AJ: Running against him, right.

BJ: Running against him in the primary again.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Yeah. Okay. Yes.

AJ: I mean, they both lost the primaries. But, hmmm, that's because...

BJ: But as far as Clay County is concerned...

AJ: Right, now they won.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah, they won. How about issues, local issues?

AJ: Well...I still think the important local issues, hmmm, in Clay County are economic. Hmmm...abortion, of course, has played a big role in the ins and outs of party politics.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Do you...can you see any trends as far as either one of those? Economic issues...I presume that agriculture is...

AJ: Right. Agri-...you know, the county is agricultural, everything depends on it.

BJ: Yeah.

AJ: Hmmm. Obviously, things aren't bad enough yet for a real swing to the Democratic Party. Ah, that's probably because Clay County has so many beet farmers who...who haven't been suffering to the extent that others have.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Hmmm.

BJ: There's a certain irony there, isn't there?

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Because it's the...it's the government subsidy that makes them prosperous.

AJ: Yeah. Mmmm-hmmm. Sure.

BJ: And yet they are not particularly supportive of government intervention in lots of areas. [Chuckles]

AJ: No. Mmmm.

BJ: So I always look at that, too, that...with a degree of...as something that's quite ironic. And the...do you think the abortion, the Right to Life Caucus, is that a continuing thing, you think? Has it showed any trends during the course of the...?

AJ: Well, hmmm, they were remarkably quite during the [District] 9A election this year, I would say. Hmmm. Possibly as a result of the...of the [Ken] Kludt trouble, hmmm...and...hmmm...

BJ: They...they...in other words, Diane, who probably would not have been their...their...Diane Ray Williams, who did...was...

AJ: No. No, if they had...had wanted to do something, they could have beat her.

BJ: Yeah, that...

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: I just...

AJ: You...you know that.

BJ: Yeah, I just really was amazed that that did not seem to emerge.

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: And...and...

AJ: I mean, nationally, the movement seems to be...hmmm...gathering a sort of a second head of steam.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: But I don't know really what's going on in Clay County.

BJ: As far as...yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, we've covered, I guess, the three major areas of your career. Hmmm...well, four, if you talk about English teaching! [Laughs]

AJ: [Laughs]

BJ: And then your musical teaching and performance. Your community service, broadly defined. And then...and then this political activity. Hmmm. My most vivid impressions of you on the political scene was: you are someone who has done her homework and knows the answers! [Chuckles] Of...of the various minutiae it takes to make something work.

AJ: Oh. Obviously.

BJ: And you obviously did a lot of homework.

AJ: Right.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Hmmm. And persons with knowledge end up being influential in that...

AJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: And that...that was the...I'm sure your objective to know, and thus be able to influence the course of events.

AJ: Right. And I...well, my whole training has been, you know...you just prepare yourself as well as you possibly can, to do whatever job is...

BJ: Well, are there...are there any things...any aspects of your life that we ought to get on tape so that they are preserved?

AJ: Oh, I...I don't...

BJ: That you can think of?

AJ: I certainly can't think of anything.

BJ: Ah, let's talk just a little bit about retirement.

AJ: Mmmm.

BJ: Because, obviously...[Laughing] I'm not sure that the level of activity has changed any!

AJ: No, it hasn't.

BJ: At least, you've moved your site of activity!

AJ: Hmmm, Ray is...is busier than he was before, he's on our township board, now chairman, and has been real active trying to get money from the state for a road in Otter Tail County, in our township.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: Ah...he spends a lot of time on that. He's also on the Food Shelf Board.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And we're...we're not heavily involved in church activity. We're both on the Church Cabinet. Hmmm. But, you know, don't do a whole lot there. And hmmm...then...we're busy enough, that's for sure.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Still involved in DFL affairs there?

AJ: Right. We're...we're...I'm still on the State Central Committee.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm.

AJ: And hmmm...and Ray and I are both on the County Executive Committee.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. And we probably at least ought to get on tape that Ray is Ray Johnson, who is a longtime educator.

AJ: Right.

BJ: And I remember him as being on the faculty at South Junior High.

AJ: That's right.

BJ: I don't know if...was that his career, basically, as a...in the school?

AJ: You know, in...as far as Moorhead was concerned.

BJ: Mmmm-hmmm. Mmmm-hmmm. Okay. Ah, but you are finding some time to do a few other things that are fun?

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Yes. Yeah. And you have a home on a lake, is that right?

AJ: Right. Mmmm-hmmm.

BJ: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, I guess we've covered everything.

AJ: Good.

BJ: Thank you very much.

AJ: You're very welcome.

[End of interview]