

Interview with DeLoss Walker, Memphis, Tennessee, December 9, 1974,
conducted by Jack Bass and Walter de Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: --background and how long you've been involved in
political consulting.

Walker: I started the advertising agency in the year of 1965.
November '65. With no real intention of developing a political consult-
ing agency at all. And I am not that at the present time on a full-
scale basis. I have an advertising and marketing firm and we do all
kinds of advertising and marketing work. But because of my previous
involvement and my previous interest in the political situation, through
the JC organization, that's where my interest, I guess, started so far as
politics are concerned. I ran for national director of the Jaycees on
a governmental affairs platform. Conducted several governmental affairs
seminars, both in Washington and in Arkansas. Then when I was elected
president of the Arkansas Jaycees I also ran a governmental affairs
platform. And then we made governmental affairs our number one project
that year. That was '65-'66. Started organizing in the local community
to participate in local political election. And as a result several
Jaycees in Arkansas were elected to the statehouse. So when I organized
the company I guess maybe it was natural, as a result of my past involve-
ment and knowledge of the people across the state, for someone to in-
quire about my interest in maybe handling a political campaign. So we
started with a political campaign in 1966 with a candidate by the name
of John Fogelman, who was running for the supreme court in Arkansas.

And as I said, they came to me. I did not really solicit the candidate. Have not solicited any political candidate particularly since I started. It's just sort of fallen in line, I guess, because of the interest. We bucked the system at that stage and we were successful. He was an unknown candidate. So we went from that to one campaign after another.

Walter de Vries: How many campaigns have you been involved in?

Walker: We've had now a total I believe--and I identify these as campaigns, each campaign, not candidate. For instance a run-off, general election as a campaign. So we've had 32 or 33 campaigns. We've won 27 and lost 5.

J.B.: That's a pretty good record.

Walker: You're providing me with the opportunity to brag a lot. I think it's probably the best.

W.D.V.: Is there anybody else in the South that does the kind of political campaign consulting you do, that you know of?

Walker: Not that I know of.

W.D.V.: Why is that?

Walker: I don't know. That's an interesting thing. I don't know. There are a lot of people in the business that are afraid of political campaigns. A lot of people in my business are afraid of political campaigns because you win-lose. You know, that win-loss record is very devastating to a man's economic growth. Now some of the people in the political consulting business just blitz. They run around and blitz campaigns. Run as many as they want. And they don't seem to worry about the win-loss record. I guess that's all right. I don't know. Some of the guys in Washington, as you know, do this.

J.B.: How many states have you been involved in?

Walker: Six, I believe. Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Louisiana. That's six. I think it's six. I have had opportunities to work outside of that framework and plan to do so. But probably the success we've had has come from our selectivity of candidates.

J.B.: What do you look for in a candidate?

Walker: That's very difficult to define, precisely what you look for in a candidate. But the most important thing, as far as I'm concerned, is that candidate's ideology is very close to the ideology that I personally have. I don't feel that I can go out and become involved in a political campaign with a candidate unless I can at least believe very strongly that it's the right thing to do at that particular moment. I don't feel that I can put forth the kind of effort that I put forth in a political campaign unless I feel very strongly. And there are a few people across the country that also do it that way and I think that's the proper way to handle a political campaign. But I look for a man who I believe is moderate in his general philosophy, liberal with regard to his race attitude. I feel like that a very candid, open type person is the type individual I prefer to identify with. I don't think that it's appropriate for the guy to be the soothsayer of the past, the old type politician who has all the answers. The public is not asking for that kind of candidate. Frankly, I like for a man to tell me every once in a while he doesn't have all the answers to all the problems that exist in the country. That's the type individual. Of course, when I start interviewing an individual I go down through the list. You know, I ask him

how he stands on 14b. I ask him how he stands on as many issues as I can think of at that particular moment that I think that are important. And I think from that I'm able to evaluate what kind of character that the man is. The man comes in, if he's got money--I don't care whether he's got any money or not because I'm of the opinion that you can raise dollars if you've got a good candidate. You need a little front money, of course. But I think if you have the right candidate you can raise the money necessary to win a political campaign. It's very difficult. I go into the home of the candidate. You know, I don't just have one interview. He doesn't come into my office and visit with me and then that's it, we make a decision. I'll give you an illustration of probably the most interesting thing that happened to me. I ran into Dale Bumpers. I always go back to Arkansas state Jaycee conventions and he was there. We had just chartered a new chapter in Charleston, Arkansas. So the Jaycees in Charleston, going to their first convention, decided they wanted to have something a little exciting at the convention. And Bumpers was talking about running for governor, in Charleston. Very few people outside Charleston had much knowledge. This was 1970. So he came to the convention. I came in on Saturday night to stay away from the political involvements at the convention. Just came into the banquet. As soon as I arrived I had several of my Jaycee friends tell me that Bumpers was there and that they had told him about my involvement politically and suggested that he should contact us and me and that I should contact him. He said "Well, send him around to my office, up to my hospitality suite." So I went by about one o'clock in the morning.

Jaycees and Jaycettes welcomed me in to his hospitality suite and

in the back room where he was. And then he'd meet you and pat you on the back a little bit and shuttle you through the back door, you know. So they had just about been able to reach about all the Jaycees at the convention that weekend. I came through about one o'clock in the morning so we started discussing what we thought the needs in Arkansas were. Our discussion concluded about 7:30 in the morning. All night long we talked. When we left I asked him to check me out and I'd check him out. I said "I think we need to find out if what we feel here tonight about each other is correct." So after several weeks of investigative work why we both decided to make a move. In Jake Butcher's campaign in Tennessee this last time I spent over a year investigating Jake's background, finding out what kind of person he was. I go to their home, they come to my home. They visit with me here. That's the process I go through and then at some point we make a decision.

W.D.V.: Generally don't you end up working with kind of anti-establishment type candidates? People who are not involved in old line party politics.

Walker: Oh yes. I'm a very strong believer that we need to have new blood challenging the system continuously. I think that one of the real problems we have in the country today is the fact that people are elected to office and by some reason or another they are just able to stay there for a lifetime. I think that's the real problem we find ourselves in with regard to our election process. And people get to the point--I remember one time Bumpers said to me "You know, if I'd of known some of the things that I know now, after the election, I might not have

said some of the things that I said during the campaign." The point is, a lot of times, once you get into the position you feel like there are somethings you can't do. The point is, he was speaking the sentiment of the public at the time that he was running for that political office. We get too far away from that point, I think, when you get elected and you get in the position. It's like management and business. You have the same problem. We stay in that position, that ivory tower, and we loose contact with the other end. You know, where the need is.

W.D.V.: If you'd gone in the business about twenty years ago and picked anti-party or anti-establishment candidates, you would have lost, right?

Walker: I don't know.

W.D.V.: Okay, let's put it this way. It seems to me that the South is more receptive to these kinds of candidates in the last ten years than say the ten years before that. You came along at a time--

Walker: That's probably true. They were much more entrenched. They were so entrenched at that time. First of all, not the South. I cannot speak for the North except that I have been in those states very regularly for a long period of time. And I don't feel that there's any basic difference between the South the North the East and the West, with one exception. The South has liberalized considerably and in fact, at this particular time, is probably more liberal than most of the North. I think the reason for that is because they've had to come to grips with the racial problem. It's an interesting thing.

J.B.: Do you think coming to grips with the racial problems has

resulted in more liberalism in other areas.

Walker: No question about it. I can give you an example of that. You go into the panhandle of Texas, where they've not had to do this, and they're just as redneck as they ever were. You go into Oklahoma and you'll find the same thing in Oklahoma. But go into Mississippi, where they really had to bite the bullet. In 1971 we ran the campaign for Governor Waller. First time anybody ever courted the black vote openly on the tube. People thought that was an absolute no-no. Didn't affect his campaign at all. The white vote came out for him very well. Oh, sure, it turned off the clan element. But I'm talking about the average person on the street, it did not turn off.

J.B.: You handled Waller's campaign, both of Bumpers' campaigns, all of them. And Briscoe's campaign and Butcher's campaign. Any other gubernatorial campaigns?

Walker: Yes, I came in the last three weeks on Ben Johnson's campaign when he was running for governor in Louisiana.

J.B.: Did you then handle his Senate campaign?

Walker: No, I did not. As I said, we came into that campaign with about three weeks to go in a run-off. He didn't have, as you well know, a really difficult Senate campaign. Unfortunately for us, we don't get called in until there's a tough race. I'd like to be able to get some of those easy ones.

J.B.: How about Senate or Congressional races?

Walker: Of course Bumpers' Senate race. And I've handled Bill Alexander's Congressional race. Ed Jones' Congressional race in Tennes-

see. And Senator Eastland's campaign, his last campaign in the state of Mississippi.

J..B: How does Eastland fit into your philosophical frame that you outlined?

Walker: He doesn't. That was a very interesting thing. First of all, I was probably looking for someone to run against him. And of course no one came on the scene that fit what I really felt was an important move for the state. So I had made my decision to stay completely out of the race. There were some people in Mississippi that wanted me very much to visit with Senator Eastland. So I visited with him and after several visits with him and after several conversations, why I came to the conclusion it was in the best interest of the state of Mississippi for me to handle his campaign. Because I felt like that he was not nearly the individual. . . or as hard-nosed about some of his points as the public thought. So I went about with the purpose of trying to improve that basic image of the individual. Unfortunately Eastland. . . . Do you know him? He's an extremely shy person. He is uncomfortable with the press. Completely uncomfortable. It isn't a matter of wanting to or not wanting to. It's just very difficult for him to do it. It's interesting that a person can be in the position that he's in and not feel as free as he ought, I guess, with the press. But he's a very fine person. I was impressed with him. I certainly do not agree with him you know, one hundred percent on his basic issues. But I think under the circumstances of that particular election it was appropriate for him to be elected.

W.D.V.: In a competitive election what percent of the net result can you attribute to your firm's work?

Walker: I don't know. I wouldn't try to make a . . .

W.D.V.: Would they have won without you?

Walker: I wouldn't even say that. I have to say this. I'm a very strong believer that just because you're a good man doesn't mean you're going to get elected. There are a lot of good men out there. The public is not just going to grab hold of you and automatically catapult you into the election arena and give you the governorship or the Senate position unless you have displayed some kind of organizational ability, some kind of ability to stir up that enthusiasm and get that ability you have across to them. There are many good men out there that ought to run for political office that are not running, as you know.

W.D.V.: Most of the candidates you've work with started with a very low identity rating. Let's start with a typical candidate. What do you do with him?

Walker: Okay, the first thing that I start doing with a candidate is that you've obviously got to get your ideas together. You have to see that you are compatible with him, the individual. After that's done.

W.D.V.: Stay right there for a moment. Is it true that you insist that the candidate must do what you say or you won't take the account?

Walker: I'd have to say that I like to be in a position of being as close to the candidate to the extent that the man believes in what I

advise him to do. With regard to organization, things of this nature. I do not tell an individual what he's got to believe. In terms of the organization of the campaign and so forth, I believe that's my responsibility. There is no man in this country today that can run his own campaign. You go out, as an example, and run a campaign like we run where a man might make ten or twelve speeches in one day's time--and that has occurred, on a few occasions--and let him try to become involved in the management of his campaign? It's just absolutely impossible. I think that the candidate has got to set up his overview. He's got to determine the direction he wants to take at the early stage of the campaign. Then he has to have someone who is tough enough to carry out that basic plan once that plan is agreed to. I feel like I'm the guy, then, to carry out that basic plan. To see to it that we do not deviate. To see to it also that. . . . The enthusiasm of the campaign is dependent upon whether the folks out in the boondocks think that there's somebody up there that's carrying out a plan. That's got a plan and that's carrying it out. You know, the worst thing that happens in campaigns that I've seen is the diffusion of activity. You've got a committee going with a thought here and you've got some other man who's trying to take control or management of the campaign. He's directing it in one way and another's directing it in another way. As a result, you get just a montage of confusion. And the general public has no basic identity of the individual, nor do they know where they can get a decision. I think it's important that you start that campaign in some direction and hang on to it. And that's my job: to hang on to it. I feel very strongly about

that. I don't think it's at all telling a candidate, you know, you've either got to abide by my rules or we don't play. That's not the approach at all. It's just a good type management approach to a campaign. Because, as I said before, if you're not careful, the press, your campaign committee, people you see on a day-to-day basis, will run your campaign and you won't really know it. They won't mean to be running your campaign. It's just that managing any kind of business demands a certain amount of control over what goes on. Managing a schedule. Managing where he goes and things of this nature. As an example, if a candidate goes out and makes so many speeches today and all he hears is a negative item on a certain issue, the first thing he gets--if he's not careful--he gets the opinion that that's what is the important thing on the public's mind, that particular issue. If he's not careful he'd go out and maybe make a mistake by making that the number one issue in the campaign. When basic research might tell you that that's not the number one issue in the campaign, that he is basically getting an element in the community that's making a lot of noise. It's like the busing issue. Everybody's talked about the busing issue in the South. That's never been a big issue in the South. There's been a lot of noise about it. Makes front page newspaper coverage. It's just like the ultra-right and the ultra-left. I've got a quote I've used several times: "It takes a liberal left to shake loose the conservative right to awaken the so-called silent majority to action." And I think that's true. But unfortunately, if you listen to what's being said by the ultra-left and ultra-right, if you're not careful you'll miss the message of the center.

W.D.V.: So a basic part of your campaign plan or strategy is research. Are there any other elements to it?

Walker: Oh yes, very much so. Research is not just everything, certainly. What I also do is this. I start, before we ever have any media exposure, we start the organizational effort. And I'm very strong on getting ten, fifteen, twenty-five good solid people at the local level who have previously never been involved in a political campaign. If they have, it's not to any major degree. They are people that have the same basic image that the candidate has. That is, fresh, young, unscarred, individual whose attitude is pretty much, as I said, in the center. Because, if you were to have this particular candidate go out and start a campaign with shall we say the old politicians running his campaign at the local level and you come on the tube and talk about a fresh young star, you have no credibility. Certainly in the local community. So the identity of the individual that you select to be your campaign coordinator at the local level is a very, very important thing, I think. And these people have to be just good solid workers. Because we've found that there are a lot of people willing to contribute their time, contribute their work and also to contribute their money to a political campaign that have never been asked before. Never been sought out by any candidate. Because each time, just like you when you start in Texas, you've got a list of twenty-five or thirty so-called well known politicians to interview. There may be a lot of people that would be better to interview in the state of Texas to give you a better interpretation of what Texas is. That's the same thing at the local level.

You know, say Joe Jones has been running Podunk county for the last hundred years. When, if somebody else were to come on the scene, they might do a much better job than Joe Jones has ever been able to do. But unfortunately, no body's ever asked anybody else to do it. That's the point that I'm making here. I think that there's as much significance-- I've said on several occasions before that our organizational thrust is the most important part of our political campaigning because of the fact that in the market place we have the same image we have when we get on that tube and start asking--

W.D.V.: Yeah, but you're generally known as a media specialist.

Walker: That's really unfortunate. You cannot take the tube. You cannot take all the money you want to take. You could buy all the time you want to buy on television and never get an election. Because you don't have the troops out in the market place. You've got to have that first. I'll give you a prime example of that case. The state of Tennessee, this year. A young man ran for governor who was a smart young man, good candidate, attractive candidate. He spent more money than any other candidate in the campaign. ~~Hainey~~ ^{Haney}, in the Democratic primary. He hired Charlie Guggenheim to come down and put together his campaign. And you all know what his campaigns are. In addition to that he hired the same guy who put together the organizational campaign for Fulbright. And he put those people in the state with all the money they wanted to spend. Plenty of time to do it. And they'd go into the community and tell them "Look, give me a campaign coordinator in the community. I'll pay him." You know, \$1000 a month or \$1500 or \$200 a month.

But he fell short. And the reason he fell short was simply because he lacked the troops. If he had organized. If he had gone out and put the troops together, chances are he might have won that race.

J.B.: What's your response to the contention that Hainey and Butcher were basically going after the same people and they split. If one or the other hadn't been in, the other would have won.

Walker: I think Butcher would have won, I don't think ~~Hainey~~ ^{Haney} would have won. And the reason I don't think ~~Hainey~~ ^{Haney} would have won is just exactly what I just stated. Butcher's votes would have been split up among some other moderate candidates, but Hainey would have gotten a good number of them. I doubt seriously, though, if Hainey would have gotten enough of that vote to have won the election.

J.B.: There's little question in your mind that Butcher would have gotten it.

Walker: There's absolutely no question in my mind. In fact, this is a mistake I made in the planning of the campaign. We waited I thought until we had our timing set right, but not knowing that Hainey was going to be a candidate. We should have gotten in the race a little earlier. If we had of we'd of won the race. We just got in it a little bit late. I didn't anticipate, as I said, anybody like Hainey. I didn't anticipate Charlie Guggenheim would be in the state. So, those are things that you don't know until you face them. I didn't know it at the time. And of course Hainey coming from that part of the state, going after the same basic moderate vote that we were going after, made it very difficult for us. No question in my mind but what we would have won handily. And

I'm of the opinion that we might have won anyway had the judiciary hearings not occurred when they did. If you remember, they occurred during the final close of the campaign. We were right down to the wire. I've got the polls that show that the race was going like this. . . the named candidates were going thisaway and we were coming up. But when we got to that point, everything stopped. The mood of the state went to the hearings. People started listening to the thing on television every night. They were very disgusted, upset, concerned about the political process. As a result everything just sort of stopped at that point when really there should be a lot of movement during the last ten days of the campaign. And there was very little movement.

J.B.: The House Judiciary Committee Impeachment proceedings.

Walker: Right. And they occurred, as I said, during the time when we were having the close of our campaign.

W.D.V.: Once you put together that organizational piece of the campaign, what are the other pieces that you think are essential?

Walker: After that, it's the candidate and the media.

W.D.V.: By media are you referring principally to television?

Walker: Principally television, yes. One of the reasons is because it's the next best thing to looking a person eye to eye. There's one thing that television has done. Gee whiz, there's so much to cover. You sort of tap a point here and there and hope that maybe you get across a point that's worthwhile. In the late 'fifties and the early 'sixties, just getting on television itself would do the job. You could sort of use the term media blitz and you could put on a good looking guy and let him smile and get by with that. But that's changed considerably because

the audience, I think, is a much more astute audience. They now understand television a little better. Just as you and I can sit here together and look each other in the eye for a while and have a fairly good idea as to whether, you know, we're lying to each other or we're trying to con each other or something of this nature. After a period of time you can begin to feel that. Well, the same thing applies to television. Some good people come off poorly on television because they don't know how to use the media. There's no question about that. A lot of good people lose because, you know, you walk a new man in off the street into the television studio and let him sit down and start trying to communicate. It's a difficult task. If you've never done it, you can't do it very well. It's like picking up a golf club for the first time and trying to drive that ball three hundred yards. You can't do it. But if somebody walks in and helps you sit down and let's you become comfortable and shows you that you're talking to the people on a one to one basis and things of this nature, and shows you some of the things about the television studio. You become comfortable. Then you become yourself. But you see, there are so many of these people walking into a television studio and they are not themselves. They don't come across like they come across sitting in this studio talking to me or talking to you. And the reason is. . . just like you do. If I come in with a camera and I say all right, I want to take your picture. Do you know what you do? You start posing. You start getting your better side up to me. You can't help it. This is a natural tendency that we all have. Same thing applies to television. This is something that's very

difficult. Once break that down, then the individual begins to get comfortable and to start communicating, realizing that he's not always supposed to have his best foot forward. But anyway, in the 1950s and early 'sixties, I think we went through an era when blitzing of television could get an individual elected simply because it was new and we didn't know anything about it. Even the people producing television didn't know that much about it. So that gave an opportunity for some people, I think, to get elected that just got elected because of media blitz. But that's changed. Today you'll see, as an example, a lot of my commercials if you've ever watched any of them--I like to sit a candidate down on a stool with a drop out background with no fanfare, no whoopla, just let him sit there and talk. Feed him from here. And I think that that's the best selling there is. If the public can feel what he believes, understand what he believes, and know what he's thinking,. . . if he's got it. If he doesn't have it then you shouldn't be there to begin with.

W.D.V.: --the success of the 27 winners you've had?

Walker: I think so.

J.B.: How many candidates do you estimate you've talked to and not accepted?

Walker: Oh gee, I talked to fifty candidates in 1972. Over fifty. I estimated that I turned down fifty candidates in '72.

J.B.: And how many campaigns were you working in?

Walker: Well, in '72--and I'll never do this again, by the way--I was involved in eleven campaigns in six states. Eleven different campaigns which actually made six or seven races, I mean complete races.

I had six at one time going simultaneously. As I said, I don't want to do that again. That was just too--

J.B.: Do you do your own polling?

Walker: No. That's one thing I'd never do. I think that that's one effort I have to depend on outside people for.

J.B.: Do you use different people for different races?

Walker: No. I have used Harry Summer here in Memphis all the time. He's with a company called Marketing Consultants. He's a professor at Memphis State. He was an individual who had never handled a political campaign before in his life. Had been doing some bank research for me. I asked him if he'd like to do some polling. So he started doing some polling. We've set up somewhat of a form system that we think is, gets us the information we think we have to have on political campaigns. And he's done a good job.

W.D.V.: Have you noticed any other change in techniques in the last ten or fifteen years? You mentioned the one in television, the blitz and how it doesn't work anymore. Have you noticed any other basic changes in campaigning?

Walker: I think that the public is far more informed as a result of television today than they've ever been in the past. This probably goes back, not to any other change, it goes back to the basic change that you suggest. In the past thirty, forty people could congregate in Nashville, Tennessee, or Jackson, Mississippi, or Little Rock, Arkansas, They would basically determine who would be the candidate, who would be the governor of the state in the next election. Simply because they had

the contacts with leadership in the local community. That was really management of a campaign in those days. Because the candidate, then as now--what can he reach? Two percent of the public? By campaigning, handshaking. What do you estimate in an average state? Two percent? That he could actually reach. So this, I think, is the real mistake when people start talking about campaign reform, you got to be eye to eye with these candidates and so forth. If the candidate spent six months out knocking on doors and shaking hands, I estimate somewhere between two and five percent. I don't see how in the world he could ever get to five percent. Maybe in a real small state he might reach five percent of the total people. At least if he makes a speech somewhere--you don't really get the feel for the candidate, all you get is the spoken word for a few minutes and he's gone. But there you get the individual. Whereas in the past, those forty or fifty guys would go back to the community and they'd say "All right, this is the man we're going for." You can run a newspaper ad. You know, you can say anything you want to in that local newspaper ad and anybody can look fairly good. You talk about managing a political candidate. That's what we used to do. I say we. That's what they used to do because I was never a part of that certainly. But today it's a much more open thing. Because the public is in charge. The public is running the program. And the so-called management groups are not managing anymore. The candidate then is much more free to act once he gets into office. Dale Bumpers went into the governorship of Arkansas without having made one single promise to the people of Arkansas except, of course, that he'd be the best governor he possibly

could. And that he was for, you know, all these things that he was for. But he never told one single pressure group he'd do anything for them. He never told one person that they could be appointed to any specific position. And in my opinion that's the way that the process out to go. And that tube has had a lot to do with that. And the press being, you know, much more inquisitive than they've been in the past. And so forth.

J.B.: Getting back to the Tennessee election this year. You're in a position to view that very objectively, I think. The final result. Did it surprise you that Blanton won? Did you expect him to win after the primary?

Walker: Yes. Primarily it was a Democratic year. But secondly, though, the Alexander forces never ran a very good campaign. I expected them to. The general election, that's what you were talking about right?

W.D.V.: Why didn't they?

Walker: You know I don't know. I've tried to assess why they didn't really run a good campaign. But they didn't, for some reason or another. And frankly, they had a good candidate. Lamar Alexander, I think, is a very sharp young man. But for some reason or another he never really got with it. He never got his organization moving. Now they seemed to move a little in the last week of the campaign. I noticed some movement in the last week. Their television was aloof. They never really got to the guts of the basic problem in this state it seemed to me like. As I said, I've watched Baker's campaigning and he's always done an outstanding job. Very direct, very much on top of what's going on.

Very active. His organization is extremely active. But for some reason they never got it stirred. They never got the enthusiasm. And as I said before, I think they had the candidate. They could have won this race, because Blanton did not have that kind of organization. Blanton has never been known, you know, to be strongly organizational oriented. And he doesn't really come across that strong. In his speeches, you know, you don't get that feeling that he's a dynamic individual. So I think it was a case where no question it was a Democratic year, but also the Republicans never did really bring the race to Blanton at all.

J.B.: Blanton seemed to put it all together, but did that happen because of him or because of other things? I'm just trying to understand what happened? We were here in August and went to the unity meeting in Nashville. The candidates were all there but we weren't particularly impressed with Blanton's role at that time.

Walker: I think it's very apparent that a lot of people recognized the mistake they made four years ago in the governor's race when they did not--after having been a candidate in the Democratic party--they did not then support the Democratic candidate. Some of those people then found themselves in a very bad position in the state. As a result, of course, those people didn't do well in the campaign. I think that was very much on the mind of everybody.

J.B.: We found a great willingness in people we talked to. People who had opposed Blanton in the past, this time ready and willing to support him, with enthusiasm. The impression I got is that occurred, but not so much because of him but because of the fact that he happened

to be the winner. Would you take issue with that observation?

Walker: I wouldn't take issue with it, no. I don't think there is any question but what there's a lot of enthusiasm for the Democratic party. They were not as enthusiastic about Blanton. I mean nobody had anything negative on Blanton, it wasn't that. Nobody was really desirous of putting Blanton down or anything of this nature. I think had there been negatives on Blanton he would never have gotten the primary, never won the primary. Any negatives that amount to anything.

J.B.: But he got only twenty-two percent of the vote. You think he would have won it if there had been a run-off?

Walker: Oh, absolutely not.

J.B.: The impression we got

Walker: That was it. I concluded--and again, maybe this is not objective--I've very strongly of the opinion that we'd of gotten two-thirds of the vote in a run-off with Blanton.

J.B.: That was about the impression we got, knowing far less.

Walker: Yeah, I think there's no question but what we would have. Butcher came out of the race in great shape. This state has got to have a run-off law. Anytime you get in a state without a run-off law, you find that that state is very vulnerable to the leapfrog type government that really makes it very difficult for the fresh guy to get into office.

J.B.: There's little doubt in our mind that if Alexander had won and the Democrats obtained control of the legislature that there would be a run off law. It got vetoed by Dunn and the general perception was that it was vetoed for political purposes. A run-off law would accrue to the benefit of the Democrats. With the Democrats winning

this time, do you think there will be a run off law?

Walker: I don't know. I'm almost of the opinion there will not be.

J.B.: It took a lot of the steam out of it, didn't it?

Walker: Yes, it did. Because I don't know whether Blanton is for a run-off law. And I'm not so sure that some of the people there at the present time. . . . You know, an incumbent is not really for a run-off law. Most any incumbent, most any member of the legislature would not be too excited about a run-off law because he recognizes he can always muster thirty to forty percent of the votes, if he's any good at all. He ought to be able to do that. And this can maintain his position in an office for as long as he'd like to be there. But you get him in a run-off and that's a completely different story. It's pretty hard to head to head an incumbent, even the first time out. What you hope to do in a run-off--what you hope is that there will be three or four or five candidates in the campaign and then one guy will come to the top and he'll be able to outdistance the incumbent. That's your only chance. Not your only chance, but it's a lot more likely that you might win.

W.D.V.: The run-off law is unique to Tennessee politics. Are there any other unique features in the other five states in which you have been involved? That make the campaigns different.

Walker: I'd have to say that every campaign is different. There is no one campaign that's the same. You know, you can look at the Bumpers campaign and the Briscoe campaign. None of them really. . . .

W.D.V.: Was there something unique about Arkansas politics as

compared to the other states you've been in?

Walker: Not particularly. You've got certain elements that are a little bit different. Arkansas is probably a little more liberal than some of the southern states. It's moved out a little more rapidly. Part of that has been because of its little more rapid industrial growth in the state. I think probably as a result of Rockefeller. I think Rockefeller has been very, was very beneficial to the state. And what he contributed during his years there. I think that helped that state. You've got pockets in each state that you deal with of very conservative areas. Like, as I mentioned a moment ago, the panhandle of Texas. You have got a few places in Mississippi that you have the same basic problem. In eastern Arkansas they claim it's a very conservative area, but it's not. But it has the image of being the same. You've got, of course, Tennessee, that's unique in the fact that all of west Tennessee has been identified as being Democratic through the years and east Tennessee that's been identified as being Republican. But we found early in the campaign that east Tennessee was moving toward the Democratic party and west Tennessee was leaning toward the Republican party. Very interesting phenomenon that I think is occurring in this state. Because through the past you've been able to depend on east Tennessee going Republican and west Tennessee going for the Democratic party. That's changing and it showed up changing in all our early polls. Back in the first primary. What we like to do when we run a poll is this. I don't like to go

issues "which is the most important in your opinion?" I don't go that route. We say "What is the single most

important local issue?" What is the most important--

[End of side of tape.] And they're telling us really what's on their mind right off the top of their hat. Then we ask them this question:

"Do you plan to vote in the Democrat or Republican primary?" Even though we have already asked the question of the candidate, what candidate they plan to vote for. We still ask the Democratic or Republican primaries. And we found, early in the game, that about 54--I almost didn't believe it--54 percent of the people up there were going to vote Republican. Which was a big drop. Which made it about a 46 percent Democratic vote in east Tennessee. That was pretty hard for us to believe early in the campaign. But it turned out just about that way in the campaign in the fall. And it turned out about that way in the primary it looks to me like from what I could see. About 54 to 56 percent voted Republican in the Republican primary.

J.B.: In your opinion was that a reaction to the Dunn administration and the problems, specific issues affecting east Tennessee? Or is that more a historical shift?

Walker: I think it's a combination. Maybe it's a part of the negativism that's kind of developing across the country. A lot of people, those things that they were for they are now changing. Maybe that's a part of it. I don't know. They were traditional Republican in that region. The combination of the Republican party, Nixon and so on, plus Dunn. Here's another factor. I believe that the Republican party--since they have not had a governor for what? Many many years. East Tennessee has not had a governor in fifty years. And they had been always support-

ing the Republican party, of course. I believe that the Republicans in east Tennessee felt that as soon as they elected themselves a governor all of a sudden they will have reached the promised land. That the governor was going to be able to do just everything they wanted and that all of a sudden east Tennessee would get the kind of services they felt like that they ought to get. That the reason they hadn't gotten them in the past has been because of that so-and-so Democratic party who is just not willing to give them those services because they hadn't given it the vote. And then, when they elected themselves a governor, for some reason or another they didn't get those services. They didn't get what they expected and no one ever does. So he may have been the fairest governor, as fair as anybody ever was for east Tennessee. I don't know. And yet, on the other hand, west Tennessee expected nothing. And whatever they got was a plus. So west Tennessee was very happy with Dunn. Where east Tennessee was very unhappy with Dunn. So I think it was a combination of several points. Don't think it was any one point. But I think it was a combination of the fact that they had never had a Republican governor. Had there been a Republican governor before and had they experienced--at least in the last fifteen or twenty years--a Republican leader and recognized the fact that he couldn't deliver them everything, they may have felt differently.

J.B.: Do you think the perception of Alexander as a Republican then was stronger than the perception of Alexander as an east Tennessean?

Walker: Yes, I do.

J.B.: Do you think Butcher would have run better in east Tennes-

see than Alexander?

Walker: Yes. We would have carried east Tennessee with Butcher.

J.B.: You swept it pretty much except for that Hamilton county complex.

Walker: Yes, that's correct. But we would have carried east Tennessee in my opinion in the fall. Of course that's all maybe hopeful thinking on my part. But we had fairly good organization throughout that part of the state.

J.B.: How would you characterize these six states? Just a summary analysis of where they are politically, out of where they have come, and where do you see them heading. The ones you've worked in and are familiar with.

Walker: I think that you'll have to say, if you take Massachusetts out of the ballgame, that they are a little more liberal than the majority of the states.

J.B.: Take each of the six individually. Sort of compare and contrast.

Walker: All right. I'd say that the most progressive or the most liberal of those states is Arkansas. I'd have to say that maybe Louisiana is next. The northern part of the state of Louisiana is a very interesting thing. It's a very conservative area and it appears to be more conservative than the southern part of Arkansas. You know, they are right there together, obviously, and it appears that the life styles are somewhat the same. Their income is somewhat the same. Same types of income and so forth. But it appears to me that the northern part of

the state is much more conservative than the southern part of the state of Arkansas. So I'd have to say that Louisiana would be next because of the southern part of Louisiana being quite liberal. They've changed considerably I think in the southern part of Louisiana in the last few years. Particularly around the New Orleans and--

J.B.: Do you mean liberal in terms of race and economics?

Walker: Yes, right. When I say liberal, too, obviously I don't mean ultra-liberal. It depends upon what you call liberal.

J.B.: In your use of the term liberal here do you also mean moving in that direction?

Walker: That's correct.

J.B.: Does that mean that you say the next governor of Louisiana, after Edwards--who should, presumably be able to succeed himself--more governors in that mold.

Walker: Yes. I see more governors in that mold throughout the entire six state area. You've had an interesting thing happen in Tennessee. As I said, I think Louisiana's next, then I think probably Mississippi is next, with that same basic attitude. Then it would be a toss up between Texas and Tennessee.

[The tape speeds up beyond intelligibility and then stops.]

[End of interview.]