

This is an interview with Edward McIntyre, President of the Elected Black Officials Association, State of Georgia, conducted in Augusta, Georgia on April 22, 1974 by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries. Transcribed by Sarah Geer.

Jack Bass: Now, you are a member of the County Commission for Richmond County, is that correct?

Edward McIntyre: Yes, I am.

J.B.: And tell me a little bit about your. . . just your background. Are you a native of Augusta?

McIntyre: Yes, I am a native Augustan, born here some forty-two years ago, from a poverty-stricken family. Born in the heart of the ghetto. I think one of the assets that I have always had is that my parents have been deeply religious. In fact, my mother just celebrated her thirty-fourth anniversary as a Baptist preacher. A few in Augusta, which I think is a very unique thing for a lady to be involved in, and this has been a tremendous asset to me in my philosophy and my attitudes toward living and life and people. I worked my way through college, the old bit that you hear all the time. I went to Morris College in Atlanta with a hundred and fifty dollars in my pocket, and told my mother I'd be back when I got a degree. That I did by working summers and after school for four years. Exactly five years. I stopped for a year because I didn't have enough money to go back. But that's the kind of life I lived. I believe in hard work. I work right now an average

of twelve to sixteen hours a day, and I've been doing it since I started to work when I was in the fifth grade, and I haven't stopped yet.

J.B.: Your position with Pilgrim Life is what?

McIntyre: I'm a vice president in charge of program development.

J.B.: And how did you get involved in politics?

McIntyre: Well, some years ago I worked very hard with the NAACP and the local chapter, and with the regional. . . worked on it as a regional advisor for the southeast region. As a result of working with the NAACP and being concerned with the welfare of people, I got involved in really doing things and participating with lawyers and visiting other cities when they were in trouble, and this kind of thing. All of a sudden, I found out that. . . I think that we had, to some degree, finished our task as an individual working directly in the civil rights bit. And I said that maybe I ought to look for another way to work with and for people. And I thought that maybe in the decision-making process, the political arena, probably with my background, concern and experience, that I could be more helpful to my community and to this state if I got directly involved in politics. And that's what I did. For several years, I'm a professional p.r. practitioner, so for several years I conducted the campaigns of / ^{other} blacks, and strategies and things. I don't know if you know this or not, but Augusta had the first black city councilman south of Philadelphia. Some years ago. Even before Atlanta had any elected officials. And I spearheaded that campaign and worked with it, and did so for several other candidates, not only here but in South Carolina and in some other communities. And as a result of that, I myself eventually wanted to be in politics. Because

I thought that I could do some good. That's the reason I got into it.

J.B.: So when did you first run as a candidate yourself?

McIntyre: 1968, for the house. I ran at that time against the strongest Republican that we had in the community. He was an incumbent, and I think he beat us by some twenty or thirty per cent vote, which we though was a victory for us at that time. We were delighted with the results, although not completely happy about it. But we were delighted. I think that we made a lot of friends as a result of that campaign. Let me say too that even prior to running in 1968. . .

J.B.: You ran as a Democrat that year?

McIntyre: Yes. I've always been involved. Cancer Fund, United Fund, Heart Fund. You name it. I've always been involved in things that I thought would enhance the plight of people, help people. This. . . by doing so, I got to be known throughout the community as a very concerned citizen about the affairs of people. And I think this has been an asset to me as a candidate running for office. Fortunately, we won. As you know, or might not know, it was on a at large basis that we won the seat on the County Commission.

J.B.: This was in what year?

McIntyre: 1970, I think. Well, we went in office in 1970.

J.B.: So are you in your first term now?

McIntyre: Yes.

J.B.: And are you the only black on the council?

McIntyre: Yes. We have five members, and I'm the only black. But we do have a Chinese and a Jewish fellow, and we have just a regular anglo-saxon American, I think. We have quite a blend on the local County

Commission.

J.B.: What do you think has been the impact of your being on the commission?

McIntyre: Well, I think one thing that. . . . I think there were many whites who probably voted for my opposition for several reasons.

Number one is because there were some people who, I found out, who had never voted for a black man, and found it difficult to vote for a black man, and who told me that, "Although I've never voted for a black man, I've just been so impressed with what you're doing that I'm going to vote for you." I might relate this story to you.

I met an old white lady at one of the rallies. She walked over to me and she said, "You had my concern." I said, "Yes." Said, "You know, I've watched you on television during the campaign. I've read your material. I've read your platform." She said, "I find it very difficult to vote for a black man, but I've prayed about it and I've talked to other people about it, and the Lord told me just yesterday that it's the right thing to do to vote for you, because you're better qualified, and I feel that you're a good Christian and you're going to do a good job for us." I've had some other experiences running for office. I had one man ^{at} /another rally to come up to me very old, seventy-one years old, as a matter of fact. White. And he said to me. . . and he'd had a few drinks. He said, "You know one thing?" He said, "I've never voted for a nigger in my life, but, by God, I'm going to vote for you come next week, because I think you're the man for the job." We had other experiences. We had people who. . .

J.B.: How did you feel when he said that?

McIntyre: I . . . being a southerner, I felt that . . . I felt that this was progress. I said, here's a man that's under the influence to some degree, but he recognizes that out of all the candidates running for this office that I probably would do a better job. And out of his . . . under the influence he just burst out and said, "I've never voted for a nigger in my life, but I . . . by God, I'm going to vote for you." I saw this as progress. I saw many other experiences similar to this. I'm going to relate another little story for you. I was invited to a barbecue at a local high school, and a white person had invited me. Said, "Ed, I'd like for you to come out here. I think it will do you good, I think you will meet a lot of people and shake a lot of hands." And we did, and we did shake a lot of hands, and all of a sudden here come a young, white man, looked like he was in his middle thirties. And he had a little six or seven year old boy with him. So I was standing at the entrance and he walked in, and I said, "How do you do, sir? I'm Ed McIntyre." And extended my hand. And he refused to take it and walked away. And his little son ran up behind him and caught him on the coattail and said, "Daddy, Daddy," he said. "Why didn't you shake that man's hand? He's such a nice man and you didn't even shake his hand, Daddy." And his daddy said, "Come on, son. Let's get some barbecue." Well, in that little boy I saw even some more hope of what we were coming to be in the South and what was really happening. *[The point]* that I think that I wanted to bring about is that I think there are many whites who did not vote for me because they felt that I was going to be the kind of black man that was going to be in there hollering for black people every day and to take something away from them that they had. And they were

reluctant to vote for me because they were losing one other position of support for their ideas and their philosophies and probably of the distribution of funds. But what I've done, and I've done this very sincerely. I've served as chairman of public works, and I've been chairman of public works ever since I was a commissioner, which is a big job. It takes in the roads and bridges, the correctional institutions that we have here. It takes in the traffic engineers. It takes in the land fill. And we spent a lot of money. And what I've said and what I insist upon is that this money be spread throughout the county on as equal a basis as possible. What I'm saying is that although there might be fifty streets in one section of the community that needs re-surfacing or paving, I will not spend all the money on those fifty streets. I'll say, well, let's do ten this year, but let's give everybody a little bit of this money, spread it around throughout the community. And I think that now, and based on many other things that I've brought up, I'm right now, I think the co-father of the Coliseum Authority, and we are going to have a coliseum. I proposed a Georgia Hall of Fame to be built here in Augusta. I worked for Human Relations Commission and many other things of this nature, and I think that, now, that my white base is much broader than it was when I ran, because I've been, not a black county commissioner, but a county commissioner that happens to be black. I think there's a difference. Because I've represented all the people very fairly and squarely, and I've insisted upon telling them the truth about things that I liked or disliked.

J.B.: You're getting ready to say now that you feel you've established a black base. . . I mean, a white base.

McIntyre: Yes, I think that the base has been broadened. I had a white base even at the beginning, and I think it was based on the things I had done in the community over a period of years, and with various organizations, gotten to be known. And I think it's very important. Qualification alone, back in those days and I think it's even true today, will not just get a man, a black man, elected. 'Cause one of the things that was always said about me and that I always tried to say to other blacks who are running is that whites would say, and especially when you got to have a broader voting base than just isolated to a black district or a black ward. The first thing they say is that "I know Ed McIntyre, and he's qualified" or ". . . and he's a good man." But the knowledge of me, I think, played a very important role in my success in being elected. Not just he's qualified, he's got a wonderful looking resume, something of this nature, but the fact that "I know him and I know what he stands for and what he's done in this community." That played a very important role in getting us elected.

J.B.: Now you feel that you have broadened this base, do you think you will give more attention to specific areas of black needs?

McIntyre: Well, I think we've done this all the time. It hasn't been one of those things that we've completely divorced the black community or we've completely divorced the problems of blacks. We worked on problems of blacks all along, but we haven't said that as a black man, that I ought to be concerned only for black problems, is that I'm really saying. That I've been concerned with the problems of the community regardless to where they exist. And we work very religiously on what you might call, if you want to label them, black problems and

white problems.

J.B.: What specific areas do you feel that there's been a change insofar as providing county services are concerned?

McIntyre: I think that

J.B.: As a result of your being on the commission.

McIntyre: I think that, number one, that we've got more black representation on boards and commissions where blacks had never been on before and been a part of the decision making process.

J.B.: Well, what are some specific examples?

McIntyre: Planning . . . well, let's put it this way. Every board that we have, the draft board, the planning board, alcoholic beverage committee, just about every board you can name now that's in-county, we have at least one black and in some instances two blacks. I'd have to get out my books and go through the list of them, but I think that's. . . .

J.B.: Has that been since you've been on the commission?

McIntyre: Yes, since I've been on the commission. I think that's one thing. The other thing is that we have been able to relate to the commissioners in a more direct way many of the problems and been able to let them have a better understanding of black problems and black attitudes about these problems. In the area of recreation, now, for an example, we are now building and re-furbishing the black playgrounds, where probably they had been to some degree neglected before. In the area of traditional dirt streets in the black community, well, we've surpassed all over commissioners. ^{For} /the past two years, we've done more paving and re-surfacing in the black community, and in the total community, by the way, than has been done in the previous ten. I think this is a record

I think one of the most important things, if I can say this, is . . . black people were beginning to feel like it just ain't no use putting black people in office, because we ain't going to get anything either. And I think that we have been able to let black people, by being chairman of public works . . . if I was chairman of an intangible committee where they couldn't see anything, I probably would have the same problem. BUT they are now beginning to see the results, to paving the streets, to recreation and other areas. Seeing results of something they wished for, and seeing that this is being brought about with the assistance of the black man, and I think this has been a great deal of help in re-establishing confidence that we do need blacks on these boards and commissions. Because we can get something done, and can get something accomplished.

J.B.: How did you run in white precincts? What percentage of white vote do you feel you got? Did you analyze it?

McIntyre? Not down to a percentage. But I'll say this, that we had to get at least twenty-five per cent in order to win. And we had a real struggle of it as a . . . running for commission. We ran against, in the primary, in the Democratic primary, against a retired fire chief and against a man who was serving on the tax assessing board, where we do have blacks now, by the way. And we were successful in being in the run-off against the gentleman who was on the tax assessing board. The fire chief came out in a press conference and endorsed me over my white opponent for that position, and we won very heavily against him in the run-off. And then in the election itself, we ran against a very fine gentleman, a successful businessman, who was just out of office as

president of the local country club. It was a hot race. He had far more money than we had. He could buy the media that we had bought. But we shook over five thousand in ourselves. We had about five hundred volunteers of every walk of life and every color working with us. As a result of that, we won by 97 votes. And we thought it was a victory for the community, not for me, because it was indicative of the fact that this community does, to some degree, recognize and will support a qualified man who has proven his concern for the community. And that's what happened in our election.

J.B.: Was your white support coming from upper income precincts, or lower?

McIntyre: Both. As a matter of fact, we have a ward here that is called a ward, and it's been known to be the redneck ward in our city government. We received some two hundred some votes from that ward, and this had never been done by a black man. The best that had been done was under a hundred, maybe 56, something like that. So I think it was . . .

J.B.: Did you actually campaign?

McIntyre: Oh, yes.

J.B.: In that precinct?

McIntyre: I sure did. I campaigned all over this county. But we did receive heavy votes from the affluent whites, in what we called the upper wards, the seventh and eighth wards. We did get very heavy votes in those areas. As a matter of fact, we carried one ward and almost carried the other.

J.B.: Now, was that in the primary, or in the general election?

McIntyre: In the general election.

J.B.: Against a Republican?

McIntyre: Right. And the upper wards are heavily Republican, too.

We feel that many Republicans voted for us, in that election.

J.B.: How many elected black officials are there in Georgia?

McIntyre: In Georgia. Well, we've had just recently an upsurge of more, but it's over two hundred. John would have the exact figures on that. But we've just had a recent election, and had some more city councilmen that I just met recently at our last meeting in Macon.

J.B.: How active is the Black Elected Officials Association?

McIntyre: Well, we just got started. This was a dream of mine. I think very active. We had very, very good participation at our last meeting. You know, it's . . . as somebody said to me, "Ed, it's a real job to try to lead leaders." I said, "Yes, it is." That's about what it is. Everybody's primarily a leader themselves and they want . . . politicians have this kind of ego thing. They want to be recognized and they want to be head of things, and this and that thing. But we have had very good support. We are planning a seminar in Atlanta on the tenth and eleventh of this month to inform and to educate black elected officials how to be more effective, being minorities, on their perspective boards, in their particular perspective governments. And we think that this is going to be a highly successful seminar, and we think we're going to have very good participation. The primary purpose of GABEO, Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, is to inform and to better education black elected officials in being effective in their jobs, and we find that recognizing that politics is something almost to us as black elected officials. We need to exchange ideas and to talk

with each other about our experiences and how we made certain things successful as we went along, sort of exchange ideas and bring in experts to talk to black elected officials on what they can do as a minority on a board to be successful. That's the primary purpose

J.B.: Who will you be bringing in, for example, in the Atlanta meeting?

McIntyre: We've asked the Voter Information Project, we've asked the Election Fund, the Southern Election Fund, and we've also asked one other organization to put together for us, along with our four major committees, a seminar. The kind of people that we'll be bringing in and the kind of information that we will be using will be political teachers, will be elected officials. We've also thought about bringing Tom Bradley in to talk with us about how he did it in Los Angeles. We have available in Atlanta people like Maynard Jackson and others, A drew Young and others, who, we feel, can have a tremendous amount of input into telling a guy from Chitterling Switch, Georgia, where you got two thousand people and you've got a black city councilman, as to how he can become effective and do a better job in a position he holds there. And this is the kind of thing we hope to accomplish.

J.B.: Are any of these black elected officials Republicans in Georgia?

McIntyre: Oh, yes. We have some Republicans. That's why we're non-partisan with the Georgia Association of Elected Black Officials and we do not endorse candidates as a body. And we feel that in order for the organization to be successful that we have to be non-partisan and not be party. Now, we do recognize that 98 per cent of the black elected officials of Georgia are Democrats. But we do have a few Republicans.

J.B.: Is there any sort of a Democratic . . . a black caucus within the

Democratic party in Georgia?

McIntyre: No, it isn't. I think they have in the . . . in the General Assembly, the senators and state representatives have what they call a black caucus, I think, that meet on occasion to talk about problems that are unique to black people or to them, and how they can best cope with them. And I don't know if this is an organized group, or . . . I think not. It's just a group that meet occasionally.

J.B.: Is there any sort of a black political organization, statewide, in Georgia?

McIntyre: No, I brought this up at our last meeting, and I've assigned a committee to look into this, to study it, and to bring recommendations back to us on the tenth at our meeting in Atlanta. And the reason why we're doing this is we feel that we do need a statewide organization that we can call on people from throughout the state when we have a problem, that we can discuss it and find out how best to approach that problem to be solved. And for this reason, I've recommended that we do have an organization of that type. We have had an organization of that type. Some years ago we used to have a black Democratic party of Georgia. It was under the direction of Judge Walden out of Atlanta, who died some years ago, but this organization doesn't exist any more. The kind of organization that I envision is having the organization not of political elected officials, but have people who have shown concern for the political arena and what goes on it. Through the years we've drawn on them to form a network throughout the state to work on problems that we feel we ought to be addressing ourselves to.

J.B.: Do you see such an organization dealing with such problems as simply

voter registration, getting out the vote . . . ?

McIntyre: I think that was one of the major roles of this organization. Right now we feel that we're going to pick up twelve more seats in the house this fall. With the ones that we have there now, this is going to be something that everybody is going to have to reckon with.

J.B.: How many blacks are in the legislature now?

McIntyre: About eight, ten, twelve. Something in that area. When we pick up twelve more seats, we'll have about twenty-four or five. I think this is something that we'll have to reckon with. Anybody would have to reckon with.

J.B.: Are there any black Republicans in the legislature?

McIntyre: One.

J.B.: Who is that?

McIntyre: I can't think of his name. He's from Atlanta. He's an older man from Atlanta who . . .

J.B.: Oh, yes. I do know who it is.

McIntyre: Yeah. He's been in the Republican party for maybe fifty years, and he's still there. We're not concerned, as I tried to tell somebody the other day, we're not concerned with the party as much as we're concerned with results, with people that we can trust, and know that they're concerned and responsive to the needs of all the people of Georgia, rather than to be concerned with a special interest group. If it reaches a point where we feel that the Democrats - and we've told them this, and put them on notice a few months ago, when Robert Strauss was here, that we're no longer going to sit back and vote Democratic just because a few leaders said this. We're going to be either at the top, making the decisions, or we're not

going to be in the party at all. We're going to be at the top of any party we're in, on the decision-making level. We're going to have representation there, and if we do not have this, then we're going to have to find another way of being politically *[active]* in some of the parties.

J.B.: What did . . . how did Strauss respond to that?

McIntyre: They're already working on it. I got a call from J. R. Kirkland just last week, another one Sunday. They're forming an affirmative action committee in the state of Georgia, and he agreed that what we say ought to be done, and that he's endorsed the concept, and we're working towards it, to have blacks, not only on the local level in the state of Georgia, but also throughout the Democratic party, up to the national level. And we're going to have black representation there.

J.B.: How strong is the Democratic party in Georgia?

McIntyre: I think the Democratic party is very strong, and will be strong for another twenty or thirty years.

J.B.: You think the Republicans have peaked?

McIntyre: I can't. . . I don't think I'm astute enough to say that they have peaked. If they have peaked, then they are on a downward trend right now, because of Watergate. I can't predict whether they've peaked or not, but I do know that Georgians are traditionally Democratic, and we will be that way for some years to come.

J.B.: What do you think would have to happen for Democrats to carry Georgia in a presidential election?

McIntyre: I think that in 1976 that the Democrats will carry Georgia on a national level. I think that one of the things that happened in the past

is that . . . and the reason why Georgia has not been doing what it's done for so many years, is because the Republican party latched on to those things that Georgians and southerners were deeply concerned about, the busing and several racial questions that, I think that many Georgians saw the Democratic party as a party that brought about changes in civil rights that traditionally they didn't want. And because of these kinds of things, somebody up in Washington, we don't need that because these Washington people are making these decisions and they are affecting our way of life and Mr. Nixon and his people came along with what Georgians wanted to hear. And they thought that this was our man. And I think that's the reason they voted, and I think this is the trend the Republican party's been taking. But I think that now that most of the civil rights fights are over and black people have gained several things for themselves, that we're going to see a coming back to the party of the people, from Georgians and other white southerners throughout the southern states.

J.B.: What sort of coalitions do you see blacks developing?

McIntyre: I think that for the first time, during Maynard Jackson's campaign for senate, that Maynard used an approach that - it's not a new approach, but it was somewhat new to Georgians - is that black people and poor white people can get together, that we are a majority and that we can do something against the bureaucracy of the state and the country. And I think that this. . . I think that we saw, to some degree, a small marriage there, because Maynard carried more country towns, and he carried a good number of the votes. And people have begun to recognize that it's not in the color, it's in the man. And I think this is one of the reasons why Maynard Jackson is mayor of Atlanta now, is because of what he preached

to people and what he told them, and he opened their eyes. And as I always say - not to Senator Talmadge's face, but I've said it to many others - that Maynard Jackson made Senator Talmadge a better senator, because he brought out things that really made the senator think a couple of times about what he had not been doing, and how he had not been working directly with his people and they didn't know what he was doing. And now he does a better job, and as a matter of fact he's put a black on his staff who's doing a very fine job for him there. And we have a local caucus here, and Senator Talmadge is going to be our next speaker, next month, in the black community.

J.B.: Do you attribute that change directly to Maynard Jackson's challenge to him?

McIntyre: I think that it played a major role in the change of attitude. Senator Talmadge is an astute politician and a smart man, and he recognized the power of the vote.

J.B.: And do you think that he has genuinely changed?

McIntyre: Yes. I really do. I think that he's more responsive now, and I can name numbers of things that he's done in direct support of black people throughout the state. And I don't mean one or two black people, but I mean for the masses of black people.

J.B.: Name some of them.

McIntyre: Well, in terms of housing projects that's been built by black churches, the senator immediately endorsed these projects and worked toward making them realities. There are two here in our community, and there are many others in other

J.B.: You're saying that his help helped get those projects approved?

McIntyre: Right. He supported them in every way, and endorsed them because he thought they were worthwhile. And these projects were in the areas having to do in research, as he told me, that the housing units were needed. I can say ten years ago, with regard to the need. I don't think the projects would have been done and in all probability Senator Talmadge might not have supported them. But I think that today he supports them, and I think another thing, the . . . having the black on his staff has brought a new dimension to his office. Now he has somebody there that he can relate to on a daily basis as to the problems of black people in this state, and in order to be a better elected official, and recognizing the power of the vote and recognizing there is power in the black vote, that he's more responsive to the problems of black people now.

J.B.: But in addition to endorsing his . . . these housing projects, his office actually helped (Interruption in recording. Side two.) Talmadge would be doing such things.

McIntyre: Well, I heard a joke, and I don't know how true this is, but they say that some years ago, that several blacks went to see the senator, and said, you know, that, "you have not done anything for black people, and we want you to do x, y, z projects for us." And the senator said, "Yes, you know, I don't mind doing projects for you. As soon as you are able to muscle up enough votes to help keep me in office, then I'll be responsive to your needs, but I'm responsive to the needs of the people who put me in office." I've heard that statement made by many people who knew the senator, who know the senator, and I believe there's a bit of truth in it, because the senator is a very astute politician, and I

think he recognizes the vote, and I think this is what has brought him around to wanting to do more for black people. I'd also like to say that I think that a man reaches a certain point in life where he broadens his attitude and concern for people. And I think that It seems to me that when you are in politics, you're going in as a concerned citizen for the people who put you in there, and somewhere along the way you get divorced from people and you become an institutional representative, and ^{as} you reach you peak and mellow a little bit, you go back to the people and you have no more need to be concerned with a livelihood and all these kinds of things, so you become more dedicated to people's problems. And I'd like to think that this is where the senator is now. He's back to the people and their problems. More so than to

J.B.: Has his voting record changed?

McIntyre: Well, in some areas, yes. I think his voting record has changed. As a matter of fact, I just got some information across my desk this morning. We sent a flood of letters to Robert Stevenson about the OEO extension legislation, and he indicates in this memorandum here that he's in full support of it and is going to do all he can for it. This is the kind of thing that we're doing throughout the country now. It's the kind of thing of using the power , the local power, hopefully to convince our national leaders as well as our local leaders that we (Interruption for telephone call.)

J.B.: Congressman Stevens, do you think he would have been . . . was he supporting OEO legislation in the beginning?

McIntyre: The word that we received that - I can't tell how accurate this

is - but the word that we received is that, number one, that he was a key person on the subcommittee to determine whether this would happen or not, and that the . . . they didn't know whether he was going to support it or not, and that there was word that maybe he might now support it. And we were advised to . . . and I might say that Congressman Stevens and I are very good political friends, and we've come even better. So what we did is, our elected officials in the Tenth Congressional District, black, to write him and to have other organizations to write him, and let him know our personal feelings about it. And I was happy to receive this memorandum on Friday, indicating what you just read there, that he will support it. I'm not saying that we changed the senator's mind, either, but I'm saying that we did write letters and we have gotten a response that's in favor of it. I think that blacks are beginning to learn a little bit better the political process and how you get things done. And we're using those tools and techniques that's been used by other people for years.

J.B.: How much of a problem is the one you mentioned, of many blacks not seeing direct results of political activity, and therefore they've registered or maybe voted once, and now don't see any need to take the problem

McIntyre: I think that this kind of apathy, if I may address myself to this first, as existing with all people, not just black people. I think it's existing with all people. And people are, if I may use the word, just thirsty for freshness in politics and for a man that they feel is, really, is concerned about their affairs and their problems, and they feel that most elected officials have divorced themselves from people and their

problems, and they're only out there trying to hog up what they can get themselves. And that they get in office not being concerned about people. And I think this has been one of my assets. I've, on a daily basis, tried to show my concern through action for people, and they're looking for this kind of thing. Going back to your original question about blacks, I think that for lack of knowledge about politics and hard work, when the opportunity avails itself for black people to run for office and for the new privilege of registering, black people when to the registration office in masses to register. Because I think they had one thing in mind, that if I register, and if I can get some black people in office, then we're going to get all the things that we haven't gotten in three hundred years. And what they've, I think, has been disgruntled to them, is that one person on a board of fifteen can't bring them everything that they haven't had in three hundred years. And for this reason, they've developed this apathy of, "Well, we don't care. You know, it's not going to do any good." And I'm hoping, as I preach all the time to black elected officials, that we must, not only for the sake of black people but for the sake of all people, must have this revival to the point that we bring back strong belief in elected officials and that they are concerned. And if they're not concerned, put them out of office and try to put somebody in there who does exemplify that concern that we need for our people. And when I say our people I mean all people. I get calls occasionally, well every week, for people saying, "I was told to call you because if I call you you'll get something done, whereas if I call somebody else nothing will happen." And I returned ninety-five per cent of every call I receive. I don't care where it comes

from. I return it and if I can do anything, I immediately get on it or have my people address themselves to that problem. And I do this because that's what I was elected to do, serve the people. And I'm concerned about that, and I really want to do a good job.

J.B.: How important, in your judgment, has the Voting Rights Act been?

McIntyre: I think that it's been very important. I think that it's opened up a new hope for black people throughout this country. In spite of the apathy now, I think that every year, as a result of it, we're still getting more and more black representation, which never would have happened, it never would have occurred, in my opinion, unless we'd had the voting rights in 1965.

J.B.: And you said that was immediately followed by just masses of people going and registering for the first time.

McIntyre: That's right.

J.B.: But in the last couple of years, southwide, there's been no . . . there's still . . . my point is, there's still thousands and thousands of people who are not registered, and there's been no great effort at voter registration. Do you see any change in that?

McIntyre: Well, I think that we recognize this problem, and we've decided now that we're going to have massive voter registration drives throughout the state of Georgia. We're going to try doing this with local people who will exemplify themselves as leaders in a community, and hope that they can rally around and get people concerned. We're going to try to point out to the people the results of what some people have been able to accomplish for blacks and for whites alike, because they've been elected officials, because they've been in the political arena. And we hope

that by doing this and by showing results, that we will come back and get people elected. Now, I think that all of this but as is true with anybody, it takes a stimulus to motivate people to get out and do what they haven't done. I think that Maynard Jackson was a stimulus in Atlanta, when he got forty-nine per cent of the black people, or forty-nine per cent of the votes in Atlanta to be black. I mean, this never would have happened if somebody had just gone on in there and said, "We're going to try to have a voter registration drive." But the fact that Maynard Jackson is running for mayor and he's a black man, that hope came up again that if we get this man in, maybe we'll get better for our people because he's a black man. Not only is he a black man, but we've been impressed with Maynard Jackson as vice-mayor. We know that he's qualified. He's not just another black man, but he's qualified. We feel he would do a good job. I don't think that black people are no longer concerned with just putting a black in office. I think they want to put a man in there that they have belief and confidence in, and feel that he will do a good job, and that he's not going into office to do the same thing that many other elected officials have done, and that is try to fatten their own pockets, and this type of thing. I think that they believe in Maynard Jackson. It could have been another black man who had announced for that same position, and he wouldn't have gotten the same results from black people as Maynard Jackson did in Atlanta. I firmly believe that. I think it happened, and will happen in other communities throughout the . . .

J.B.: What do you think is the significance of Maynard Jackson's election, Atlanta being the largest city in the deep South.

McIntyre: I think that the results in . . . that history will record this

as being that Maynard Jackson is going down in history as one of the greatest mayors Atlanta's ever had. He's going down in history as the man like I try to be, as not a black mayor, but a mayor that happened to have been black that has done a heck of a good job of re-organizing the government, making the government more responsive to the people, and doing just an all-around good job, with a lot of support from a lot of people in that community. And that's the way I feel about it, and I think that's going to be the results, and I think that one thing, too, it's going to help in terms of white people's apathy or fears of voting for a black man. Because Maynard is going to be a mayor for the people of Atlanta.

J.B.: How do you find Both, how do you perceive and how do you find blacks in general view Lester Maddox?

McIntyre: I think that Lester Maddox has been viewed by many blacks as a man that you can tell what he's thinking and what he believes in, as opposed to a white man dressed up in a white suit wearing a blue suit. But I think that Mr. Maddox made a gross error, and I think that he lost a tremendous amount of black support in the state of Georgia, by the recent statement he made concerning Dr. Martin Luther King's portrait in the Capitol. I think that that did him a tremendous amount of

J.B.: What was his remark on that? I recall

McIntyre: I can't quote it directly, but it was something in the gist of this: Martin Luther King is a . . . was a communist and caused more bloodshed than maybe any other single man in the state of Georgia. Along these lines. And that the portrait should not be in the Capitol. And black people throughout this country, not only in the state of Georgia,

have deep feelings for what Dr. King stood for. And I'm sure that they resent very grossly the fact that anybody would say that he's a communist and that he caused bloodshed, when his methods and his procedure, based on everything he did, was non-violent. And I think that this did a tremendous amount of damage for Lieutenant-Governor Maddox and the state of Georgia, so much so that he's lost support for his candidacy.

J.B.: Before he made that comment, at that time, you believed then that he may have gotten some substantial black support?

McIntyre: Yes, I really do. I think because during Lester Maddox's term as governor, before - and I don't know if he was directly responsible for it or not, but he gets credit for it - more blacks were hired in the state government in key positions. And black people are interested in employment, because it enhances their ability to live a better life. This is a key thing in black people's lives, is being able to get a good job and having equal opportunity. Well, this had been stressed and publicized throughout the community, that Lester Maddox, although he might be this and he might be that, at least he gave black people jobs in the state. And this had not been done by previous governors. This was an asset, this was something in his favor. But to come out and make the statement that he did a few weeks ago, I think it's damaged him tremendously. I don't think that he can overcome it by election time.

J.B.: Had he not said that

McIntyre: I think he would've gotten

J.B.: what percentage of black votes?

McIntyre: I can't . . . but let's say that . . .

J.B.: I mean, ten per cent, forty per cent, eighty per cent? I'm just trying to get some

McIntyre: I think he probably would have gotten, maybe, between twenty-five and thirty-five per cent of those voting. If he had not done that, and . . . I understand he's made another speech called the integration speech that I haven't heard, but I got that report last week. I mean, he lost that. Because in talking to people throughout the state, they were saying, "Well, heck, I'd rather deal with Lester than to deal with some other people I don't know about." You know, as I said before, a person dressed in one color suit and really wearing another, an astute, polished and can hide their own feelings and maneuver so that you don't know what's going on.

J.B.: How do you assess Jimmy Carter as governor?

McIntyre: It's been my view, and I hope that this will never happen again, I wish that the law had passed that it couldn't happen again, and that is when a governor can run . . . the present governor, going out of office, can run for lieutenant governor. I think because of this, and the fact that the lieutenant governor let it be known almost from the beginning that he planned to run for governor again. So my attitude is that all the strong ties that he had with department heads, with other people in government that was left there, had a certain amount of fear, respect, concern - whatever you want to call it - for the lieutenant governor, so much so that they've never relinquished a relationship with the lieutenant governor, nor their loyalty, in some instances. And I think this has affected the present governor's administration. The fact that the lieutenant governor still had these loyalties and strong ties with many people in the administration. I think that Jimmy Carter is a well qualified man that could have been even a greater governor for Georgia if he didn't have to deal with what I've just said. On the other hand, in spite of that, I think

that he's been very progressive. He brought some good things to Georgia, and I don't know if they're going to last. When he re-organized the government and did away with a lot of fat in the government. I think all that was good. I'm in full support of his human resource program. I think that's another good program. I think that he brought a tremendous amount of progressiveness to the state in terms of his administrative ability, and I think he could have done even a greater job if it hadn't have been for the fact that our present lieutenant governor was just governor, just before he took over office. I think this really did a tremendous amount of damage.

J.B.: Do you think blacks are likely to end up unifying before any single . . . behind any single candidate for governor this year?

McIntyre: I hope not. I'm not . . . I think that one of the mistakes that we've made in the past is that because of our lack of political astuteness we've put all our eggs in one bag. And if we lost in that bag, we'd lost out. In politics, the name of the game is that you support the people and help the people that support you. It's my hope that we will not do that, or that we will not support one candidate. I'm sure that Lester Maddox still is going to get some black support. Not doubting that at all. He's going to get some black support. I think that all the candidates are going to get some black support. I'll say this, though. When it comes down to the last mile, and it comes down to the election itself, whatever candidate's running on the Democratic ticket, in all probability - unless it's Lester Maddox - will probably get eighty per cent of the black vote. Lester Maddox, I don't know how much of that support he would get, but he still would get some.

J.B.: Anything we haven't covered that you wanted to comment on?

McIntyre: I think that one of the things that I want to say, and I think that many white people have been surprised by this, is that there's a tremendous amount of talent in the black community that white people never dreamed was there. And I think they've been impressed by a great deal of the black elected officials, and been impressed with the job that they are doing. And I think this in itself is going to - and has and will even in the future - help race relations. Do away with a lot of fears that white people have had. It will kind of bring about a better atmosphere to work in, black and white people throughout the state and the South, I think. People have fears of blacks doing one thing or doing another. They had fears of them not being qualified or that they wouldn't try to represent all people and this thing and that thing. And I think that this has been one of the things that I feel all the time, as an elected official, that's been a strong point in my term of office, and I think it's been strong in many others, that we do One of the things is that I don't think most blacks have that deep-seated traditional attitude about races, you know. I don't think that you'll find You might find some of the younger blacks who have a tremendous amount of hate, but I think that the average black person does not have that deep-seated, traditional, customary dislike for blacks or dislike for whites as you find in many whites. And this has come about over years of experience and traditions and a whole lot of other things. For instance, in my life, I've never had anybody to teach me, or to say to me, that I should dislike you because you're white or because you're less than I am, or because you're inferior to me. I've always

been taught, in a religious home, that all of us are God's children, and that's the way I see it. And that if someone does wrong to me, then it should be my responsibility to try to not get them to do that again by letting them see that all of us are God's children. That we should live here on this earth together and be concerned about the affairs of each other. And this has been my basic philosophy. It helped . . . I don't believe in violence. I believe in non-violence. That has helped. I believe in the conference table. I believe in performance and hard work, and all that's helped.

J.B.: What was the effect in Augusta of the disturbance this year when six people were shot and killed?

McIntyre: What was the . . . what, now?

J.B.: What was the effect of that?

McIntyre: Well, the immediate effect was very bad. But I think that I can sum it up by saying that my election - and I used as a slogan, "Together We Build" throughout our election, and I think that our . . . my election is indicative of the fact of what the community really felt afterwards. And I think the reason for this is because the black leadership as well as the white leadership came together, recognized that this is our home and we got problems that are this bad, we need to try to do something about it. And as a results of this, we got a Human Relations Commission that's doing a very fine job. We had some other reports done by the Urban League that was very revealing to the community, both black and white, and we got together and tried to resolve many of the problems. I think that there were renewed racial feelings in the white community that probably had subsided to some degree as a result of many other things that had happened,

that were brought back to the surface, hopefully just momentarily. I hope that they've gone back down now, but I think that this did happen. You could see it and feel it, you know. And I went around the community, and I think that But I'd like to think that now, as a results of many of the things that have happened in the past few years, that we are now concerned with our community, and that we were gone to reach such bitter attitudes about races as a results of the riot, if you want to call it that, that was here a few years ago.

J.B.: Do you find there's anything that black candidates have that particularly, almost make them more attractive to whites than white candidates?

McIntyre: I think that I don't think it's more attractive than white candidates. I think that most of your well-qualified whites are not interested in running for public office. So I think in many instances you come up with a mediocre white who runs for public office. And in a black community, nine times out of ten, you've got a top-flighted man. Well educated, well polished, and he's almost got to be a giant to be elected. I think this has been one of the things that's been happening. I thought, right here in this community, it's pretty difficult to get a top-flighted business man. He's not interested. He's not interested in what it would do for his family, and other things. (Interruption for telephone call.) I think that's one of the things, and I don't think it makes them more attractive, but I think that when people

J.B.: Howard Lee told us something to the effect that he found that some whites reacted positively to black candidates, on the grounds that they were people who, many whites felt, would have a greater sense of compassion

for having suffered more.

McIntyre: Well, I think that you . . . you might be giving voters credit for a great deal more intelligence that they have. I don't think that anybody, sociologically or psychologically, the average voter, looks at anything like that. I think that, you know, you find your more intelligent and your more well-read or well-educated whites might look along those lines and say that, you know, because they've been depressed and this type of thing that we have more concern about people and their problems. I think this is true, to a large degree, but I think that many whites possess the same thing. There are certainly more poor white folk than there are rich white folk, so, you know, they have the same problem there. But I do feel, as I said, we have to come up with a top-flight candidate that's probably over-qualified for what he's running for, as opposed to Well, for an example here, maybe eight or ten years ago, you know, we had a fifth grade barbecue-cooking white man to run against a Paine College professor who was a candidate for a doctorate degree from the University of Indiana or Oklahoma, one of them. That white barbecue man won over this person who was a candidate for a doctorate degree for the Board of Education. And I think that at that point in history, that race was more important than his qualifications. There was this fear that . . . this dislike for black folks, that brought his about. That same person now serves on the Board of Education. Same person, you know, ten years later, now serves on the Board of Education. Because I think the voters are more intelligent. They're not intelligent enough to analyze psychological effects or this type of thing, but I think they are more intelligent. They're intelligent enough to feel that, "I'd

rather take my chances with this black qualified person than to take my chances with a fifth-rate barbecue man." And I think this is the kind of thing that has helped. I don't feel most whites would analyze it to the degree that they would feel that it was a psychological thing, or that it was because of a sociological circumstance. I don't believe that. Could be. Mr. Lee is much more astute in politics than I am.

J.B.: ;Well, I've probably given you a very rough translation, also, of what he said. Is there anything else?

McIntyre: I see great hope for the South. I do feel that the South is the Promised Land for black people. I feel this way because, as I've said on many other occasions, one of the things that I've always been impressed by about the southern white man, and I've lived both in the North and the South, and I am a southerner, that I see different from maybe a white northerner or some other part of the country - and I think this is an asset in the South - is that the white man, although he would not let you live in a hotel, eat in a restaurant, or many other of the customs and traditions and the laws that existed in the South, the Jim Crow laws and this type of thing, if a black man came to his door and was hungry, he would feed it, you know. Although he felt that he was not his equal. Which says to me that he has feelings, a responsibility or a concern for the hunger of a black man, although he doesn't want him in the restaurant or in a motel and this type thing. Now, the difference between that and a northern white man is that the northern man doesn't have that kind of concern. He would not have fed that black man if he'd come to that back door, or front door or whatever it is. And I think that that in itself is a kind of thing that, once we convince white people that

we are not inferior intelligently, that we can think And I think that we're doing this every day, through many other areas, and through the publications that are printed. With that kind of feeling about us, and that we would be better off in the South eventually. Because I don't think that we would engender additional hate because we exemplified the kind of intelligence, or the same kind of intelligence, that a white man has, with that kind of feeling that he has for blacks. In the South. And I've found this true in the South all over. White people have always been willing to help a poor black man, with some clothes or something like that. Now, it might have been that he should have done it the other way around by, instead of giving him forty cents an hour at his plant, if he'd given him eighty cents an hour he wouldn't have had to do that. And I don't know if that was a strategy of his or not, but I do know that it's existed. And I think that that itself might be one of the reasons why I feel that blacks are better off in the South and that eventually, with the right type qualifications, with the right type skills, they can have tremendous input. And with more opportunity, that we're getting every day. That to me the South is promising.

J.B.: How do you respond to the angry young black, who came along . . . black teenagers, who came along after the civil rights movement was past, and, you know, they see things are bad and they're very angry.

McIntyre: Right. They're very angry, and I've talked to many of them, and maybe rightfully so. And most of the angry blacks are the blacks who are in school and still reading the books and still getting the education. Once they get out in life and start dealing with reality, many of them change, and they recognize that all of us are in the jungle together, and

that we must try to survive. And the best way to survive is to use your talents and skills within the system, because that's where the money is, to make a livelihood for your parents or your children, or what have you. I don't see I think that there's a maturity that they reach, somewhere along the way, once they get out of school, that says to them that what I did and what I learned in school, and my attitude in school, was not the right attitude that I have in order to make the necessary changes that we need to be working on in our community, for the betterment of our community. And that I cannot make changes with that kind of attitude.

(End of interview.)