

Interview with Jere Beasley, lieutenant governor of Alabama, July 15, 1974, Montgomery, Alabama, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: What do you anticipate is going to happen in the next legislature, with a brand new legislature that's unlike any other because of reapportionment. A majority of the members will be freshman members without prior legislative experience.

Beasley: At this point, I'd say it's going to be a good legislative session in '75 because, primarily, these senators who have been elected are people with a great deal of ability. And I think it's going to be probably a better senate. As far as the house, you never can really tell what's going to happen in the house, even with experienced people, because of the number. And the rules are much different and they operate under a completely . . . more lax atmosphere and normally you really can't gage their performance very accurately. As far as individual members. I think the house will be very much like the last house.

J.B.: I understand that traditionally the lieutenant governor appoints a majority of the members of both the rules and finance committees, after conferring with the governor. And that he in effect gets to choose or has a majority at least of those committees.

Beasley: Right. I think the rules . . . especially the rules committee. It is more important there than perhaps anywhere else. Because that's where, more or less . . . your programs have to get on the floor to have a chance to pass. And the rules committee pretty well controls what gets on and what doesn't get on as far as the important legislation.

J.B.: That policy is based on tradition, am I correct?

Beasley: It's tradition. Also. . . .

J.B.: Is it written into the rules?

Beasley: No, no. In fact it's something. . . . The administration [proposes] most of the programs in Alabama. The legislature [comes up] with very few programs as far as proposals. And if the administration didn't have representation on the two, on the money committee and also rules committee which sets special order calendars, then they would have a pretty tough time getting the programs out to the floor. And as an end result the legislature would do very little.

Walter De Vries: Is it your impression that the governor in this state has more control or influence in the legislature than just about any other state?

Beasley: Not really familiar with other states. I don't think the governor has exercised any undue influence on the legislature or has exercised any influence that is not in the best interest of the people since I've been here.

W.D.V.: Yeah, but traditionally he has a hand in the selection of some of the officers of the senate.

Beasley: True.

W.D.V.: Committee chairmen. Isn't that unlike some of the other states?

Beasley: I don't know. I really don't know what other states do in this particular. . . . I know the state of Florida had a great deal of reform in their legislature and they also had a great deal of difficulty in the last few sessions. In fact Alabama has a much higher percentage of bills passed than the state of Florida. I'm not sure it's had any bad effects on the legislature. It depends, I guess, on the

state and Alabama's legislature is not perhaps up with some of the rest of them as far as tools to work with. Staff, and things like that. Committees have no staffing.

W.D.V.: Do you anticipate the new legislature will get involved in that sort of thing? Better staffing.

Beasley: I think they will. I think they're going to have to. I think any governor would welcome this because it would take a great deal of pressure off the administration. Because if the administration in Alabama didn't come up with programs, you'd have a void there. More or less a vacuum. Or you'd have it to be piecemeal. It would be up to the individual legislators, rather than a concerted effort.

W.D.V.: Are you going to continue your effort to make this office full time?

Beasley: Well, I think every lieutenant governor's office essentially will be full time. If not at this time, in the very near future. And I would anticipate Alabama would be no different from any of the rest. Because of the complexities of government and the demands that are placed on the office, just like this morning. We've been here since 8 o'clock and it's been a pretty steady flow of activity. This has pretty well been the case since I've been here. And I don't think you could operate it any other way.

W.D.V.: Has the governor given you any administrative responsibility?

Beasley: Back early in '71, I guess the first speech he made to the legislature he defined more or less the responsibilities of the office and the work in the area of industrial development and also promoting the state generally. And of course other things have come up, due to

unfortunate circumstances such as the governor being shot. This has naturally increased the responsibilities in this direction. Regardless of who might be sitting here.

W.D.V.: Did you actually assume those responsibilities when he was . . . ?

Beasley: For about. . . during the summer months of '72, under the constitution, he's required to serve as governor after the governor is out of the state for 20 days or disabled. In this particular incident it was because of the absence from the state.

W.D.V.: Can I ask you something about this past primary?

Beasley: Sure.

W.D.V.: I didn't know Woods at all until I came to this state. I'd never seen him before. The first time I saw him on television I told Jack I thought the station had thrown up the wrong slide. Yet he was able to get over. . . well, he was able to lead in the first primary and get 300,000 votes against you in the second. How do you interpret that vote? Is that an anti-Beasley vote?

Beasley: I don't know. I would assume that he had some pro-Woods votes out of those three hundred and some thousand. He spent about \$1 million on primarily media type campaign. And obviously, if you're in office for four years, you're going to have some enemies. And I'm certain that I have some. As far as it being an anti vote, I really don't think so. In fact I'm pretty well convinced that if the campaign had lasted another week we would have beat him with probably twice the margin we did beat him. Which was 87,000, which is a pretty substantial victory considering the fact that he had led in the first primary. In fact I guess that's one of the few times it's actually happened where an incumbent trailed and then reversed it.

W.D.V.: Have you done any studies of the perceptions of him?

Beasley: Off Woods?

W.D.V.: Yeah.

Beasley: Yeah.

W.D.V.: I'm just curious. How did people perceive him?

Beasley: As an honest, hard working business man that is not a part of the establishment, so to speak and is not scarred by Watergate and not tainted by being in office at this time.

W.D.V.: How do they perceive him physically?

Beasley: Oh, physical appearance had no effect in this race. . . as far as adverse effect, anyway. In fact it was probably a plus for him.

W.D.V.: It did?

Beasley: The war record, the scarred war hero. The fact that he made good in spite of this. . . if you call it a handicap.

W.D.V.: Am I right that he's been increasing his plurality every time he ran for office. You think that's a pro Woods vote?

Beasley: I think it's a pro Woods vote, probably an anti-establishment vote to some extent. Not necessarily aimed at me or anybody else, but just the fact that he's not in.

W.D.V.: Did your poll say people perceive you as establishment?

Beasley: Yeah.

J.B.: Is there anything to suggest any psychological association of Woods with Wallace because both of them have overcome severe physical injuries?

Beasley: I really don't know. Probably, probably so. Some. You'd probably find this to some extent. I think. . . there was very little sympathy for Woods. I think Wallace did get the sympathy vote. I don't

think Wood would have gotten what you'd call a pure sympathy vote, but it did have an effect, it did get him some votes. But I think it was more connected with the war than it was with. . . .

W.D.V.: Can you tell us a little about your political background.

Beasley: I've been fairly active in several campaigns, starting back in . . . I guess you'd say '66 was the first real active participation in a state wide campaign and that was during Wallace's campaign for governor in '66. I was active in south Alabama area coordinators. And in '68 I was state campaign manager for Jim who is US Senator from Alabama. Then I ran myself in '70 and was elected. That's about it.

J.B.: Had you held any office before you ran?

Beasley: No, never run for any office prior to this one.

J.B.: Wallace's. . . we keep hearing about his organizational structure that he has in effect a Wallace coordinator in each county. What comes over that? Is there a regional coordinator inbetween?

Beasley: Yes, break it down into north Alabama and south Alabama, as opposed to Tennessee's east and west , you know. And then you have an area coordinator and then a county coordinator.

J.B.: An area coordinator would cover how many . . . ?

Beasley: Oh, some people break it down into northwest Alabama, northeast, Birmingham, Montgomery, southeast, southwest and Mobile. Seven.

J.B.: Does that stay on as a sort of permanent organization?

Beasley: It has with Wallace.

J.B.: Do patronage matters go through these?

Beasley: Probably so. The state senators usually have some say so.

But your coordinator also does.

J.B.: Has the coordinator. . . in effect, they fill the function that in some other state might be the Democratic party's function?

Beasley: Yes, if you have a two party system I suppose so. Probably so. Democratic executive committee has no function here like that.

J.B.: Do the same people usually stay on on these? I mean would the coordinators in 1970 likely be the same people in 1974?

Beasley: More than likely, right. Some people use a committee and the coordinator heads up a committee. And usually you have some new blood in the committee. But coordinators, by and large, stay the same if they want to, if they function properly and so forth. Wallace lost some in '70 to Brewer.

J.B.: It would be somewhat analogous then to the regular Democrats in Mississippi.

Beasley: Possibly so. I'm not that familiar with. . . .

J.B.: In the sense that it's involved strictly with political matters within the state.

Beasley: Correct.

J.B.: And has no real connection with the Democratic party as such.

Beasley: Absolutely not. There would be some coordination in the fall election with the Democratic party, but your primaries. . . . The campaign would be run by the Wallace organization even in the fall. And in my case, by my people. And we have some overlapping between the two organizations.

J.B.: Do you have that same sort of coordinator in each county? And sometimes they're the same as the Wallace people and sometimes not.

Beasley: Well, in some cases. We had that this time in some of the counties. Tried not to, because it's awful hard to do that. Of

course I had some who were very much interested in Jim Allen's race this time. Of course he had no opposition and so it posed no problem for us and we needed [him/them?] in the run off as it turned out.

J.B.: Does Allen take any active role in state political matters?

Beasley: Not really. Of course he's been pretty helpful to Wallace.

J.B.: In your race, did he influence at all?

Beasley: Now in the general election, assuming I had a tough race in the fall, he would. Just like in '72 when John Sparkman had some pretty severe difficulties, tough race, everybody sort of came to his aid. Wallace, me, Allen. We all campaigned for him in the fall.

J.B.: How about the formal Democratic organization? Vance's group. They also. . .?

Beasley: They also campaigned.

W.D.V.: What do you think's going to be the impact on this state and on the Democratic party when Wallace leaves in '78. Either as Senator or just gets out.

Beasley: Well, of course you're assuming there that he won't leave in '76, which I think is a real possibility. In fact I just got back from a lieutenant governors convention in New Mexico and Wallace was the talk of the convention. I'd say most of them. . . .

W.D.V.: Well, either way. . .

Beasley: What impact he'll have on the party? And the state? Well, it's hard to say. Naturally you'd have some carry over I suppose. I don't think it would have any great effect as far as the state itself, the operation of the state. Politics, certainly, it would have a large impact because you're taking out the dominant figure over the past four years, ten years.

W.D.V.: Who's going to replace him?

Beasley: Don't know. We have a lot of folks who certainly think they would be capable of replacing him. But here again that's something the people can decide, because you don't transfer popularity or charisma or following, whatever.

W.D.V.: But the way you see it, are the candidates [unclear]?

Beasley: Oh, my guess is for governor in '78 you'll probably have 12 candidates. Ten or 12 candidates.

J.B.: In the Democratic primary.

Beasley: Yeah.

W.D.V.: So the impact would be to open it wide up.

Beasley: Possibly so, yes.

W.D.V.: What about Cornelia Wallace?

Beasley: I don't know.

J.B.: In your race this fall, which is somewhat analogous to Allen's race in '72, with the potential at least of serious Republican opposition, which is the way Blount would have had to be at least to be perceived during that campaign regardless of the outcome. . . . Do you anticipate the same sort of broad base support that Allen got?

Beasley: You mean Sparkman.

J.B.: Sparkman, excuse me.

Beasley: I really don't know because I haven't even thought about the fall too awfully much yet and of course I don't know how serious the competition is going to be or the candidate will be, how strong he will be. I think all the Democrats will pretty well band together in the fall. Just like Gov Wallace has opposition probably as formidable as any I'll run in to. But I don't think it's got much of a chance. Don't

think he thinks so. But you find in Alabama that your Democrats fuss and fight during the primaries but when it's over they get together and elect Democrats.

J.B.: How significant a role and effective a role does organized labor play in Alabama?

Beasley: In my race they played a pretty substantial role. This past race.

J.B.: You got their endorsement, am I correct?

Beasley: Not the state endorsement. I got the endorsement of probably every local in the state.

J.B.: Did the state endorse anybody?

Beasley: In the first primary they endorsed the man who ran third.

J.B.: Then in the run off. . . .

Beasley: In the run off they didn't endorse anybody because they can't. . . . Once they made an endorsement in that race they couldn't make another one. But we have the endorsement of probably 28. . . oh, let's see, I could guess in labor council which is probably the strongest in the state made up of 37 locals, different groups like steel workers, communication workers and so forth. And we probably had about every one of those endorse us. And they worked real hard

.

J.B.: How about campaign contributions?

Beasley: They play a fairly insignificant role there.

J.B.: But in terms of furnishing manpower and so forth, they're pretty good.

Beasley: I'd say so. They were very helpful, most helpful to me. In fact I doubt that I could have been elected this time without them.

W.D.V.: As you think back to 1970, you're a young candidate and had never run state wide before. How do you explain your election?

Beasley: In '70?

W.D.V.: Yeah. Isn't it usually the case that you run once then you get yourself [known, and] then you run again.

Beasley: Yeah, that's normally the way it's done. But probably there were a combination of factors in '70. I ran against a pretty tough field. Are you familiar with who ran? We had the president pro tem of the senate, who was presiding at that time due to the absence of the lieutenant governor. You had Hugh ^{Morrow} ~~Marrow~~ [?] from Birmingham who was state senator who was the leader of the urban faction in the senate. You had Tom Radney of City who was a senator and who was probably the leading proponent of liberalism in the state

. Had been very active with Kennedy, for example. You had Jack ^Gfiles, who was north Alabama senator who had been grooming himself to run for a good little while. Joe Money, who's in the house of representatives, was pretty much of a factor. And there might have been another legislator, too. There were about nine candidates in the race and it was a pretty tough field. We had probably the only organization in the race. A large carry over from '68 . And we put together probably the best grass roots organization of any candidate that year, I thought. I think this has more to do with me getting elected than anything I might have done.

W.D.V.: Well, it's unusual in election for two young state wide office holders [unclear].

Beasley: I'm just curious. Maybe there were some special circumstances that produced that.

Beasley: I'm not aware of any. I assume. . . .

I don't think we have any more racial problems.

W.D.V.: You think it's been removed as an issue?

Beasley: I think it has been removed. I don't think it was an issue at all in this race that I just went through. Wallace in '70 to some extent you had some carryover in '70. Of course in the governor's race in '70 it was very much an issue. But it was really not in my race. And this way [we were not involved at all, in no way whatsoever.] I don't think it will be in the future, at all. In fact Alabama probably has a better climate in so far as the racial problems than most states anywhere around and certainly the North.

J.B.: What do you think will be the effect of the increased number of black legislators and blacks for the first time in the senate?

Beasley: I don't really think it will have any effect, in so far as having any effect on the programs or any effect on performance. I think they'll just fit in as two [very fine?] senators. They'll probably do like the two blacks who served in the house in the last session, who served like everybody else and did I thought a good job. And they ran against each other and one won and one lost, which is pretty interesting.] I don't know either of the two. [Hasn't met either of them--gives their names, Peterson and ^{Clemson}~~somebody~~.] They seem to be well qualified and seem to be interested in serving. [Unclear.]

W.D.V.: Some of the senators we've talked to were genuinely puzzled that at the end of the session you didn't push the _____ as others had done [unclear.]

Beasley: Sure. If you can't get anything done in four and a half months you're not going do it in a couple of hours after midnight on the last day. And they wound up in the tightest log jam you'd like to imagine

with more friction and chaos than probably anybody would imagine. And if something would add to the bad instead of doing any good. And the people who complained about it were folks who didn't do a very good job themselves most likely. First of all, bill could not have possibly come up for a vote because of procedure. And this is where anybody who on a local bill is not [telling the truth?] Because the local bills were down the calendar, way down the calendar. And the only way you could have gotten them up to a vote would have been by unanimous consent of the senate, not me, but the senate. If I'd of stopped the clock or anything else get them up ahead of everything else. That just wasn't going to happen because you had at least ten senators who were opposed to it. So, first of all, I told them the first day I was going to [stop the clock?]. I told them at least once on each of the last three days that I wasn't going to stop the clock. And Tuesday morning we started.

W.D.V.: You think they'll believe you in the future?

Beasley: There's no question about that. And this is not the way to pass legislation, in my judgment. [Something about violating the law by stopping the clock.] Any bill that you passed after midnight on the 35th day, in my opinion, you'd have a terrific problem upholding. I don't intend to do it any time in the future and I don't think anybody's going to ask me to at any time in the future. Would be my guess. But that didn't contribute at all to any of the failure of the session. The failures were pretty obvious at that time. The people who were objective and knew what was going on.

J.B.: We've heard a number of people say that when you get a really difficult problem facing state government in Alabama, that nothing happens

until the federal court comes up with a solution.

Beasley: Oh, you could find instances where I'm sure that's true. But on the other hand you can find many cases where this has not been the case. Federal court has stepped in many times. Mental health being the most recent and reapportionment at least a couple times. But there are other cases where it has not stepped in and you've had a great deal of progress. I'm sure, you know, you can always make a case for it, federal intervention, but that doesn't particularly interest me.

J.B.: If you were elected governor of Alabama or became governor through some other means, what would be your priority list of things that you'd want to accomplish?

Beasley: Well, first I think the priorities would have to be somewhat, not necessarily different, but you'd have to take a different approach assuming that you were elected and it was your administration rather than if you became governor for any other reason, then you'd have a little different situation, I would say. Assuming elected governor, I think the priorities would have to be based on the situation at that time. You're talking about say 1978 and maybe some things have changed by then. Right now you would have to set priorities somewhat along the lines of public education, one, continued industrial development of the state, two. And in that light you'd have to look at it. . . not only the economic gain of the state but the environmental problems that are perhaps caused or related to it. And then you've got some just social problems that you've got to recognize and do something about. The mental health situation would fit into that category, I would think. And the prison system reform or upgrading or whatever. This is going to be a pretty tricky problem to the state or to any state I suspect. And your highway problems would have a pretty high priority in Alabama.

W.D.V.: How about the tax structure?

Beasley: Well, the tax structure in the state. . . . Our problem in Alabama is not so much state taxation but the federal taxes. The income tax we've got. We don't have such a restrictive tax structure in the state in my opinion. As opposed to the federal tax structure. Property taxes. . . we've just gone through a pretty tough fight to have some type of reform there, an equalization. And if this works out I think we'll come out of that in pretty good shape. Probably you're going to have some reduction of taxes in some areas. You'll have some increases in rural property. It's going to more or less balance out. It's done on a way that I think is going to be good for the people in the long run. That's the classification system the usage of the property.

W.D.V.: Do you think the executive branch ought to be reorganized?

Beasley: I think you can stand a great deal of modernization in the government generally. I think the executive branch will be reorganized. There was some limited reorganization last, '73 session, but it really didn't get to the guts of the problem. I think we will have this eventually. It will be a tough fight. But if it was left to me there's no question about that. We have too many state officials, for example. Elected officials.

W.D.V.: That would take constitutional reform.

Beasley: True.

W.D.V.: Do you see that coming?

Beasley: I'm not sure how soon. But the groundwork has already been laid. It's just a question of carrying it out through the legislature. I think it will come about. Just had a judicial article adopted by the

people which is a constitutional revision of the judiciary. in other branches also. Including the legislature. You have a lot that needs to be done there. One is [quotas/quorums?]. If you've made any type look at the legislative in Alabama or the facilities, you see, we're obviously pretty far down the line there as far as what's been done to upgrade the physical capabilities. So . . . all of this is going to take money, though, except probably executive reorganization. Probably save a great deal there. Over the years.

J.B.: How much of an issue in the campaign was the allegations made against you [in regards to] private sources of support?

Beasley: I really don't know. I don't think it really had any great effect. Maybe cumulatively it did. Don't think. . . of course there was nothing wrong, first of all. It was a problem, though, no question about that. I think any time you have a transition period you would have that problem. You have a choice and I took the direction that I thought was best. . . for me, for the people and everybody else involved. Everything we did was public, for example. Everything was above board. All income that came in was placed in a fund which was handled by a certified public accountant. And everything was made public. And no funds were received of any large amounts, first of all. And no monies were received or in any ways used that came from anybody that did business with the state, corporation, or any person where you would have had a conflict of interest by receiving their money. It all came from just private individuals with no selfish interests and we just. . . helped. And secondly, the total amount was only \$29,000 over the full period of time. We weren't talking about any large amounts of money. I don't really think it had any serious effect in the campaign. I think

the people who seized on that as an issue were people who were against me

anyway. If it was not that it would have been something else.

J.B.: What sort of a salary do you think the lieutenant governor's office should have?

Beasley: Something less than the governor's. I'm not sure exactly what it should be. I don't really think I should be the person to say. In other states the range has been from the \$20,000 range to \$37,000. . . \$42,000. I think you'd have to gear it to the state. Certainly your chief executive should receive the top salary, which is not the case in Alabama. Were you aware of this?

J.B.: No. The governor receives \$25,000?

Beasley: \$25,000. The chief justice receives \$35,000 now under the new bill. I think probably the attorney general receives maybe \$34,000.

W.D.V.: Yeah, but he could have had it.

Beasley: Oh yes, sure. No question about it.

W.D.V.: That's a personal thing. He didn't

Beasley: Well, not really. He didn't veto a bill or anything like this. The legislature didn't pass the bill. So I don't know why had it gone downstairs or carried. . . .

J.B.: How much does the governor get for mansion expenses?

Beasley: Oh, it's several. . . . They increased it last session and as I recall it's a couple hundred thousand probably. Pretty good. But I think probably the salary is important because it does set the standard for the rest of the state.

J.B.: How about the other constitutional officers?

Beasley: \$20,000--21. Probably. I don't know. The cabinet members get \$19,800.

J.B.: Any state official make as much in salary as the football coach at the University of Alabama?

Beasley: I don't know what he makes, but I would doubt it. I think we're going to have to revise the salary structure when we have any type of changes as far as reorganization.

J.B.: How do you feel about annual sessions?

Beasley: Well, I favor annual sessions, at least in concept. The bill which passed the legislature which was voted down by the people was not a bill I could have supported. I didn't support it. For this reason. It didn't really cure the evils that it was designed to cure. It had an unlimited salary range for legislators. It had no calendar limitation in so far as sessions each year. Could have gone indefinitely. This is what we have right now. As far as I could see. I didn't see any great improvement by the bill, by the constitutional amendment. And the people sure didn't because they voted it down by an overwhelming vote. If you had an annual session bill, I could support one if it had calendar day limitations and set salaries or at least a commission with some limitation to set salaries for legislators. I do not like the annual budget. I think you have some problems there that you don't have at the present time. I would like to see the budget [only] in say the odd years and you have even years set aside for nonbudgetary [matters]. Normally, as we have it right now, it comes in the same session as budgets. I think that would be a big boon.

W.D.V.: You think you can overcome the tradition that lieutenant governor never gets elected, with one exception sometime in the--

Beasley: Yeah, I don't know. First of all, I'm not sure that that is a tradition. I don't think anybody considers this. . . .

W.D.V.: [Well, it's a condition?]

Beasley: It's just the fact that you have very few people who serve and become governor who probably had the public identity in the past. In fact before 1970. . . I'll go back and say before 1968, the people of Alabama didn't know who the lieutenant governor was. Had no idea who . . . And normally, you know, you don't get elected . . . and today there's no question that I don't have any identity problems at all in this state. In fact at one point I was second to Wallace in that particular . . . So I don't know. I think this is a new day. [I don't know if you can really relate the past to this situation.]

W.D.V.: [Something about people saying he has already begun to campaign for governor?]

Beasley: Not really. We might not even be in the race in '78. You might have ten others. So I don't plan to wage a four year campaign. . . .

W.D.V.: Do you think you [Barley tried to] influenced the race that much?

Beasley: Do I think we did?

W.D.V.: Yeah.

Beasley: No question about it.

W.D.V.: With the use of the deputies and assistants?

Beasley: And his own personal barber. He appeared at the black caucus with Woods and made. . . how many calls, I don't know. . . personal contacts around the state. Obviously he was involved in it. Why I don't know. But, you know, that's over. He lost out and so I'm not going to worry about that for the next four years. I assume he's going to run his office and I'm going to run mine. I think that each of us

has an obligation to the voters to cooperate with the other. I think the person who does not see it that way or doesn't do it is going to be damaged in the eyes of the people, regardless of your personal feelings or personal ambitions. Once you're elected, you're elected. You're elected for four years and you have to serve with the other people who are elected in that four year period. He and I happen to fit into that situation where we don't have to get along.

W.D.V.: [Unclear.]

Beasley: [Unclear.] In fact I think that would be sort of childish. I really don't see them, either of them the same way. Probably be great damage to both of us.

W.D.V.: Do you know of any other state that has two state wide office holders as young as the two of you?

Beasley: I don't know.

W.D.V.: What I'm trying to get at is that plus the fact that you've got, what, two women serving in state wide offices--

Beasley: Three.

W.D.V.: Three, I'm sorry. That's also unique, we think.

Beasley: I think it is.

W.D.V.: Just curious about that.

Beasley: You've got a situation there in the secretary of state's office, auditor and treasurer, where it's going to be awfully hard to defeat one of the incumbents if they happen to be a woman.

W.D.V.: But that's unique. In the country.

Beasley: It is unique. Yeah. It's also we probably don't need but one of those offices far as performing any type of useful function. But I wouldn't want to get into

too much because

. But if you combined those three offices it certainly ought to be better for the people.

J.B.: We've been told by several people that Wallace didn't really get actively involved in the run off campaign this year. But he voted for you and that was fairly commonly known that he was going to vote for you.

Beasley: That would be my guess. I'm not sure how common the knowledge was, but I would guess that he did. In fact I'm sure he did. But he also did not get involved. When you think about it, I don't care how popular a man is, if he gets involved, you not only get his votes, you get the votes against you who wouldn't perhaps might or might not be against you simply because [he supports you?]. So while it would be a great asset, it would also be somewhat of a handicap.

J.B.: But you feel you got his quiet support, though.

Beasley: I don't think there's any question about that, yes. Yeah, I'd say so.

J.B.: I mean his local campaign manager and so forth.

Beasley: Oh yeah, he and I have a great number of folks in common in the state. Just like in the run off campaign, I guess we had most of the coordinators for Wallace at least voting for me if not actually working for me.

J.B.: Would it be safe to presume that if Wallace wanted them to support Woods they would have?

Beasley: Oh yeah, there's no question of that. And a very simple thing to do would be to spread the word that Woods is the man. I'll admit it was an awful tough race. There's no question about that, for me.

I think a lot of folks look at it as more or less voting for a governor than a lieutenant governor. That's what I ran into all over the state, especially in the run off. It was a tough campaign. There's never been another one like it, except the '70 governor's race probably. This was very much a parallel with different issues. I've never run against a man that had unlimited funds like Woods did and he was spending them. He spent more money than I figured you could spend in a lieutenant governor's race. And I spent more than I certainly wanted to spend. We had an awful hard time raising it. But we didn't have any choice.

W.D.V.: He spent a million dollars?

Beasley: Spent a little over a million, I'd say. We spent three hundred and something thousand. For every dollar I spent, he spent four just from what I could see. From what the tv folks tell me and the radio stations. He'd call them up and say double what I've got without asking. . .

W.D.V.: Has there ever been a contest in this state below the office of governor where that kind of money was spent?

Beasley: Not to my knowledge.

W.D.V.: In a primary.

Beasley: Not to my knowledge. In fact Sutherfield [?], the man that I beat in the run off, probably spent over half a million. ~~[He outspent]~~ He outspent the rest of us just so much that it was obvious, you know. I think I probably in my first election spent less than \$100,000 [during the primary?]. Didn't use the media like we had to this time. We had a situation this time that probably hurt us in the first primary. The fact that people thought we didn't have much

of a race on our hands at first. Even though I knew that Richard Dominique who was state senator who ran was going to be a formidable opponent. In fact I thought he'd be the second man, at first. And Woods had this built in bloc of votes that he'd carried over and he ran a good race, a good media campaign. Did very little personal politicing as far as handshaking and personal appearances, but he did a good job on the television stuff.

J.B.: Who handled his tv stuff?

Beasley: I really don't know. I've heard somebody in California but I really don't know.

J.B.: Is there anything else you wanted to comment on that we didn't cover?

W.D.V.: What should we have asked you that we didn't?

Beasley: Oh, I don't know. I think you did a pretty good job of asking. I'm not sure what you're after, so I really couldn't answer that.

W.D.V.: Well, we're doing a chapter on each state and we're trying to get not only an assessment of what happened in the last 25 years but where politics is today and where we think it's going to go in the future.

Beasley: Well I could tell you this as far as political campaign style in Alabama. There's no question in my mind that the approach to running has changed.

W.D.V.: You mean the emphasis upon media?

Beasley: Yeah. I think you've got to go in that direction right now. How much in the future I don't know, but I would guess it would be in this for a while.

media campaign rather than the personal. . . .

Beasley: Yeah, I think personality had very little to do with it as far as Woods. But I think that the media campaign that he planned was very effective, extremely effective.

W.D.V.: That suggests something about the nature of the Alabama voter then.

J.B.: What was he focusing on? Was he projecting himself. . . .?

Beasley: Pro Wallace. That would really be the guts of it.

J.B.: Was he doing the talking himself or was there a. . . .?

Beasley: No.

W.D.V.: Voice over?

Beasley: Yeah, mostly. He had some of his own but very little.

J.B.: Was he projecting his own Was he standing there or sitting there in front of the camera?

Beasley: Some of it, yeah. I think the best stuff he had was short stuff instead of long shows. He had some 30 minute shows I really didn't think that the, didn't help him a great deal. Probably did, maybe I just didn't see it. He had a real fine job on the radio in his 30 seconds and 60 seconds spots. Just really hammered home the message.

J.B.: The message being that he was pro Wallace. Was that the basis of it?

Beasley: Basically this was it. That I'm going to help the governor, not hurt him. Which implied that I hurt him. And it implied that I would hurt him in the future in his position, you know, in the wheelchair. I think the rural vote--

[End of tape. End of interview.]