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This is an interview with Paula Hawkins, Republican member of the Florida Public Service Commission. The interview was conducted by Jack Bass and Walter De Vries on May 21, 1974 and transcribed by Joe Jaros.

Jack Bass: Are you the first woman ever elected to a state wide office in Florida?

Paula Hawkins: Yeah, and the first Republican for this job. It has been in existence since 1887 and it has always had three elected commissioners and they have always been of one party and they have always been men. But I felt it then, the way to run a campaign in '72, in direct contrast to the way the Nixon campaign was being run, I was co-chairman for the Nixon re-election for Florida, and we didn't get into any trouble in Florida because it is one of the two states that use party officials, and you know, they keep saying that Watergate can't be blamed on Republicans because the Republican party had nothing to do with it, but Tommy, who is the state chairman, and I were the co-chairman of the committee to re-elect and we didn't buy their style and we didn't buy their stuff. We pledged a certain percentage and ran it ourselves.

J.B.: That's what *Don* Reed did, too.

Hawkins: We didn't have any trouble. He chose the chairmen, did, but he ran, you know, he told them everything to do. But I, in direct contrast to the money they wanting to spend and did spend in

a lot of areas, I ran a very low profile, \$67,000 campaign for a state wide office. It's unheard of in this state. My opponent spent in the primary, I think about \$100,000 to beat the incumbent. Just in the primary, and then I ran against him from Labor Day to November. I borrowed one of those motor homes and had two college kids, a really darling young girl that traveled with me, just graduated from FSU and two college boys. And that was about it. We traveled, we went around listening to folks. I could tell, people were just up to here getting it, and we went around asking them what they thought. We'd announce on the radio that "we are going to be in your town, a listening post, and if you want to come and talk about any of the problems, I will be there." And if no one came, we'd go to the supermarket and the shopping centers, just work it and do it.

Water De Vries: Well, did they come?

Hawkins: After the momentum picked up, yes. You know at first, it would be, "Who is she?" And the press helped a lot, because they would always be there, again with the novelty, the type of campaign I was running. And you know, we would drive up in this great big thing and park, it was all decorated up, and if no one came, the press was still there and I would always say, "Let's go to the shopping center." We had to park at shopping centers, the thing was so big, so we would park there and go through the shopping center and the people would . . . you could just tell, if you had any rapport with the public at all, that they were ready for that type of campaign. I'd ask, "How do you feel about your utility rates?" Something like that. "If you said, 'I'm running for the Public Service Commission', they did not know what that was, even though it was the hottest primary in the history of the state, when the incumbent was defeated. It's the first incumbent that has ever been defeated.

And I thought that it would be a household word, you know. That they would actually know what I was doing, but they did not. So, I changed the verbage from, "I'm running for office," to "What about state utility rates for the next four years." Boy, they would want to talk then. Or tell them what we do and they would have something to say. "You mean I can contact you? People really regulate transportation?" And even today, now, it has been nearly eighteen months and I still have such a speaking schedule that, you know, it's the only show in town that is still alive. And the Commission travels the state and holds the service hearings in the twenty-one service districts that we have and golly, we just stack up with requests. And write them a form letter that we'll speak on your problem when we are in your community for a hearing, that I can't come to just your one thing because I am busy. And I still give about two or three speeches a week and still, people don't know what we do. It's getting a lot more attention because of fuel costs and again have been able to capture the imagination of the people by having a housewife type

W.D.V.: Is your campaign sort of a mobile version of what Ed Guernsey did?

Hawkins: No, no relation at all?

J.B.: (to De Vries) You are speaking of Lawton Chiles.

W.D.V.: I mean, Lawton Chiles.

Hawkins: No, we really drove around. He flew a lot, you know. I worked for Bill Cramer in that campaign and we ran into him at the airports all the time, but then he would go out to the outskirts of the city and walk in. You know, I watched his campaign with interest. But we put about 8,000 miles on that bus in two months. We really moved all over. We would drive late at night to get where we were

going to be the next morning. And with the kids, they could take it and I could take it. And then we would spend that day and drive again that night to where we were going. And only in the last, about ten days, did I let them drive ahead and I would fly for all the free appearances that were given as debates with my opponent. He debated me the first time, and it was fun you know, I enjoyed it. Then he came the second time, and after that, it was very difficult to engage him anywhere. Even for free time, he would . . . his mother was sick a lot, he would go out of the state, he was "interested" you know, but he just wouldn't show up. And then I wouldn't be allowed to go on if he wasn't there. So, it caused us a little bit of difficulty. He was so surprised when he was beaten that he had fourteen counties that we counted. And it took us from Tuesday, I guess, to Saturday afternoon to get it certified while he was in shock. He never really conceded defeat, I was flying on an airplane this year and saw him and he is a lobbyist now. He was a six year state senator, Democratic state senator. Real bright, thirty-five or thirty-six, young.

J.B.: What was his name?

Hawkins: Jerry Lewis.

W.D.V.: Why doesn't he believe it?

Hawkins: He couldn't. He just had everything going for him. He really ran a good campaign, I'm telling you. As far as press, and . . . but he over did it. He flew everywhere and he would have all these press conferences on ~~utilities~~ the Utilities steps. He would go to St. Pete, where the service is not too super in the telephone business, it's really

not the company's fault, but it is pretty bad and he would go there and stand on the steps and all the press would be there and he would say, "If I'm elected, I'll revoke their franchise and bring in some other company, and they will give you good service." It was dramatic and it would make news, but in fairness, it was really . . . I get along great with the press, and I like them, I think they are the greatest thing going for the country and they would call me wherever I was and they would say, "Jerry Lewis has just made a statement, you know, what is your response?" And I would say, "Well, federal law prohibits the Bell System from buying an independent phone company since 1927. Obviously, Senator Lewis is unaware of the law. Only another independent company could come in there. And General Telephone is the second or third largest in the United States. They are trying to lick the problems there. I'm sure that we can improve the service, but we cannot order that franchise sold to Bell." Which was what he had said. And it just happened that we would end up in the same city at the same time, and I would get to respond to his great . . . he was going to roll the rates back \$120 million, which was a great number. I almost voted for him myself when I got my bill. I thought, "It would be neat to roll this back, but there was no way if you were intelligent or honest that you could say that statement and live up to your commitment." And that's when I knew that people were fed up with over-promise and then you can't deliver and then they say that you are just another phony politician and "I'm through with politicians." Because they did make such extravagant claims. And I just said that I would cut out the fat and we'll keep the law by setting rates that are reasonable and fair to the company and the consumer and make sure the

services are superior, because that's all that we can do. And I really didn't over-promise, because I wanted, if elected, to be able to keep all my commitments. I was believable, I think. People ask me why I won, I think that people believed me. And again, they were ready for a low-cost campaign. We only spent \$10,000 on t.v. and it about broke my heart, because that is the best medium that I can campaign in, especially if you are an unknown. And you know, if you had to run again state wide, I'd

W.D.V.: Are you going to run again, state wide?

Hawkins: I don't know. I'm really not debating the question. The press asks me that every day, and we have tons of letters and I would say that half, well not half, but 30% will say, "Don't leave. We like you there, you are doing a super job."

W.D.V.: Is the party fractionalized?

Hawkins: I don't think so.

W.D.V.: Since 1970?

Hawkins: No, I've been in every group there was, I guess. I've been a committeewoman since 1968, and in '66, I worked for Guernsey and ran his campaign and his opponent withdrew, we ran such a super campaign, we just cleared out everybody and then we turned our troops over to Kirk and I worked for Claude Kirk in '66. Then, '68, I was a committeewoman and I worked for Nixon and in '70, we had all committed to work for Cramer, Guernsey, all of us, all the party leaders said that they had so much riding on, you know, maybe '68 would be a sweep and that Cramer lacking seniority, we should work for Guernsey, but that in '70, we would all get behind Cramer and I am just somebody that keeps my commitments and so I was ~~committed~~ committed to Cramer and then at the last minute when Kirk and Guernsey talked

Carswell into running, you know, I did not desert Bill and I worked for Bill and it did cause a big split in the party. It cost us the election, it cost us the Senate seat, and the governorship. I believe we could have won both of them without that fracas. But, I'm very good friends with Carswell. My daughter is the legislative aide to Congressman who is Kirk's business partner. So, I think that I have inroads to and get along with all the would be factions.

W.D.V.: You say that it cost the party those two elections because of the backing of Carswell?

Hawkins: Yeah, for awhile. We elected a new state chairman because of it. The previous state chairman had been in Kirk's pocket and I am always against that posture, for a party that is a minority party. We need an independent chairman that speaks for the party and not an elected individual. You say what is right, and then you can live with it. So, we did elect Tommy Thomas as state chairman. I called and asked him to run, I knew that the only cure was a new face. And he was way up in the Panhandle, had been a Republican in Alabama when, you know, there weren't any. Probably the only used car dealer in the state of Alabama who is a Republican. He was young then, so I knew that he was Republican to the core. And he was independent of everybody. *Tommy* made a big deal out of it, that Bill Cramer got him to run, that's not true. And we didn't let Bill Cramer call a soul on the state committee to vote for him. We kept Bill out of it, because we didn't want it to be said that it was fractionalized, and it wasn't. The media didn't believe that, but it's

true. They voted for Tommy because they wanted a fresh face. He is business oriented, he bought this building. We've always had kind of a floating crap game in the Republican party. Wherever the chairman lived, that's where the headquarters was. You packed up all your records and moved. It's not just the right thing to do if you are going to grow. We needed to have a base. So, he had the party buy the J.C. building that was for sale. It's just three or four blocks up the street, that nice old brick building. He bought that, formed a group, parties can't buy anything, but he formed a little group and bought that building. And it's great. It has appreciated in value and it has given us a solid base and the party has raised more money this year than we ever have before, even in light of all the troubles we've had. And I'm sure that there is, you know, deep bitterness in people's hearts, individuals, but I think that we have more in common, or not in common, and we can all pull together to do what we can for the party and the state. I was precinct worker for a long time, I think that gives me a good . . . I didn't start at the top. I'm still precinct leader in my county. It's small, but you know, people depend on you to tell them what's going on, keep them informed when campaigns start out, that type of thing. I think that it keeps you in touch with people and that's where I learned politics, it's at the door. Now, everybody thinks that you've got to return to the door, you know, ring the door bell again, they don't trust the press and all that. I think that it has always been at the door. You know, if you build up good rapport with people. It has been interesting, to watch us raise our registration, raise money, you know, during this time when you think that everybody would be in pits.

J.B.: You have been in Florida how long?

Hawkins: I've lived in Florida nineteen years. I came from Atlanta. I was a Democrat in Atlanta, though. Everybody was. (Laughter.)

J.B.: Why did you become a Republican in Florida?

Hawkins: Well, I moved here in '55 and I was just old enough at that time to get really interested in national politics and watched the Taft thing and I read an awful lot about him after that, things that described his philosophy so great, and in Georgia, you don't register by party, you just ask for the ballot. You have to ask for a Democrat ballot, there is not action there at all. You know, on the local level, it was just unheard of. And when I came to Florida, you go down to register and they ask your party, and I said, "Republican." My husband said, "What? You are registered Democrat." And the registrar said, "You can't vote if you register Republican. We don't have any elections in that party at all." I thought that she was telling me a story and I said, "I certainly will." And I did and I was not able to vote for a long time, because nobody ran on that ticket. You could only vote in the generals. Now, it has changed in my county, we are still out registered three to one Democrat, but we hold almost all the seats.

J.B. Which county?

Hawkins: Orange. But from that time, until '64 or '62, I guess, we started picking up county seats and then new people come in. You know, Florida is great for building the Republican party, and especially in central Florida, because we have a lot of people from Michigan, Ohio, you know those states, coming in and they are Republican. They retire and come down, and they help. But the young people too, we've got the

largest Young Republican Club in the United States, in Orange County. And it won as the outstanding Young Republican Club in the United States last year. Again, they are young engineers from Martin, and lawyers, you know, young people. Leon, well, of course, north Florida is still Democrat, but we elected a Republican out of the Panhandle, Pensacola, Tom Tobias, one of the brightest young stars, I think, that we have in our party. He's been elected two or three times in Pensacola and he's a Republican. You know, since I was elected, I tell everybody that I'm registered in the minority party, but you represent everybody once you are elected. And I think that's how you gain their respect, you know, of the public. By being fair to everybody and not being too partisan. The other two commissioners are Democrats and I have really beat them over the head and I'll confess I have, because it has been a one party commission so long until they just traded off, you know, "this time you run and next time you run," and so on. That's the way it was. There were a lot of things wrong in this commission when I came, and I tried to correct them internally and you can't with the two to one vote. So, I had to go to the attorney general three or four times, who is a state wide Democrat, but he had to always rule in my favor when I asked for an opinion, because I was right. Now, we've got the Sunshine Law to cover the commission, and that has probably been the biggest boon to me.

J.B.: It was not covered before?

Hawkins: No, they said it was and it should have been, but I found out after the first three or four meetings and saw how it was run and how they changed their votes and how the companies call up from New York and say, "Is it true that your orders are coming out next Tuesday?". You know, I could see all kinds of charges about stock manipulation, you know, they have ten days advance notice whether it was going to be for

or against them, and I just didn't understand it. Everybody in this building said that we were not covered and we have about thirteen attorneys, every lawyer said that this commission is judicial as well as legislative and administrative and that we were not covered, but I knew that we were, so I asked the attorney general's opinion and he said that we were and from that day on, the press is here every Monday when we vote. And that has been the greatest boon for the commission than anything I can see. There have been a lot of cartoons about "Sunshine," you know, all the different newspapers did this, calling this "Sunshine" but it was a great, for the people, because really, this commission is isolated. We regulate 20% of the state's economy, it has a great budgetary impact on everybody's life and nobody ever knew what they did or where they worked. Now I know why, the press was never allowed in. Now they are here ever Monday and it is kind of a weekly thing, people look to see what we do and then they follow it pretty closely. I am most grateful to the press and I thank them every time I have a chance. Because without them, my story never would have gotten out of this building.

J.B.: Was that your first race?

Hawkins: No, I ran in 1970, the same year of the Cramer-Carswell fiasco. I say that I ran, I let them file my name. The legislative delegation in Orange County came to me, they are all men and they said that it was time that a woman was on the delegation. They are all Republicans and asked me if I would run for the legislature. And I remember calling Bill Cramer at eleven o'clock, whatever it was, and asking him if he would mind. I was his coordinator for central Florida. And I said, "I know that I am committed to you for the Senate, do you

mind?" And he told me, he said, "Now in that, they are going to hit you, because you are with me. And I don't think that you should." He didn't want to keep me from the office and I said, "Well, they assure me that they are going to run my campaign, they will file my name. I will still work for you because it is most important that we win the primary." And so, I got his O.K. and the delegation said that they would run the campaign and at closing day, a quarter to twelve on the last day of filing, Kirk filed two people against me, two men against me at a quarter to twelve on closing, you know, the last day. One was his former aide, and Guernsey's former aide and the other one was the former county chairman there in Orange County. And I really didn't even hit a lick, I tell you, we were so involved in seeing that Cramer won the primary and then make it through a run-off and the second one he won by 1500 votes. For the legislature. And I'm really glad that I didn't win, because had I won then in politics and in the public eye, when I ran in '72 I could say that I was a housewife and not a politician and could bring a new approach to government. And I'm really grateful that I lost. It's a two county race and it was a bad session that session, really. If you had had to run on that record, you couldn't have gotten in, on anything really, if you had voted your conscience.

W.D.V.: Did Kirk help the Republican party the four years that he was in office?

Hawkins: I think the first year he did. And I've heard a lot of people say that they thought it would be better to get rid of him, that we would be better off without him. I don't, I think that we would be much better off, even, with Kirk as governor. The party, you know. He was

not party oriented. He had been a late switcher. And he made the mistake that I think a lot of elected officials make in surrounding himself with a lot of bright young men who don't have the feel for the people or the party. He was just so ambitious. His problem was that he wanted to be Vice-president the next day. And it was hard to keep his feet to the . . . he could have been the greatest thing for the Republican party in Florida, the greatest giant step that we ever took forward. And it knocked us back when he got defeated, but I think that we are better for it, because I think that you can't build from the top down. It's just almost impossible. When I first filed for this office, a young man that worked in my campaign for awhile and then he went to ministerial school, I talked him out of it and got him back, and he couldn't believe . . . he had worked in all the Democratic campaigns and I had a lot of Democrats working in my campaign, and they couldn't believe the cohesiveness that we had in the campaign. This was in the general. We went to eighteen cities in five days and we would get on the phone and say, "We are going to be in Pensacola at seven-thirty for breakfast, Don, and we would like for you to arrange it and I will be there." We would be at noon at and we will be there at evening at so-and-so. We would just call one person in the county and tell them that we were coming and to get a crowd and to have an affair and we would be there. And he still can't get over that. He says that in the Democratic party today it takes three days to decide which one of the people you are going to call in the county without offending all the rest. There is no one individual you can call that doesn't really make you some enemies and you've got to be so

careful whom you select. And that is an advantage, we do have, in the counties where we are organized, good people and you can turn it over to them. "I'm coming and you handle it."

W.D.V.: Where do you see the party ten years from now? In terms of the executive branch and the legislative branch control?

Hawkins: Well, if we win the governorship this time

W.D.V.: Do you think that you will?

Hawkins: I think that it is possible. You know, everyone says that we're not. I saw a poll last week that said 70% are going to vote for Askew again, but I remember when Kirk had 70 and Askew had 7%. About this time of year during the legislative session. And then that fall, you know, it all blew up. I see the same thing happening. I see the governor taking on his cabinet one at a time, because he is strong. You get a poll that says 70% and he thinks that now he is going to clean house. But if you take on that many people and run yourself, you'll make some enemies and that's what happened to him. I think that we've got a better chance than most people give us any credit for at all. It's an undercurrent. I travel a lot and I feel it wherever I go, that the scandal is going to backfire. The Democrats have their own problem in the state and they are just going to backfire on everybody.

W.D.V.: How about the legislature?

Hawkins: In ten years, or now?

W.D.V.: Well, let's say looking ahead.

Hawkins: Well, that's my bag. I like to tell people that, you know, everyone wants to run for the governorship and everyone wants to run

state wide, but if we could pick up the legislature . . . you know, they come to me and say, "So-and-so wants to run for the Senate." And I say, "Can you win in your district?" We can't elect a Republican to the House or the Senate, the state house or the state senate, but they think that we can win state wide. I think that you have to build in you county and then elect. And I think that in ten years we will have a majority, because of the uncertainty that is going on in the state. People don't have straight party lines, you know, they can't say, "This is Republican or this is Democrat." And we have the young people. Our party is filled with young people in Florida. Which is unusual. I met a man the other night who couldn't believe that. I went to the National Security Forum up at the Air War College and he was from Indiana. His name is Kayser and he's a lobbyist or something for Kentucky Fried Chicken and he said, "I can't believe that you are a national committeewoman." I said, "Why?" And he said, "I never met one that wasn't sixty-five years old. They always give that job to the seniors, you know, the most respected woman in the state." And he said, "I can't believe it." I said, "Most of them in the South are very young, because it is the emerging party in the South." I suspect that is why I am so converted to a two party system, is the check and the balance that it provides. If everybody here was Republican like some states that I've read about, I'd probably be out on the other side of the fence. On the state level, this provides balance to it.

W.D.V.: Well, are the two parties here split on ideological lines, one becoming more liberal, the other becoming more conservative?

Hawkins: Not more conservative, I think. I think that you see the

Democratic party going away to the left in our state, because of the large bloc that comes from the Populist areas of the Democrats and when you got that one man, one vote rule, and got all twenty legislators from Dade, that's when you saw them swing over to the left. And we have a lot of real conservative Democrats in the state that are more conservative than the Republicans.

W.D.V.: Do you see them moving into the Republican party?

Hawkins: I see that trend. I think that in ten years, if it continues like it's going to . . . and I don't like conservative and liberal parties, I think that's terrible, because if one side wins, you are locked out. I like it for you to have a lot of different grades of philosophy in each party, because if a liberal wins, you can appeal to that individual, you know, to the Stennises are whoever is in there. I'd hate to see it ever right down ideological lines. I see the Republican party coming to the middle and the Democratic party going over to the left. That's what I see among the young people. And it leaves the old Democrats way to the right and some Republicans way over there with them. But I see the movement to the middle. I'm ultra-conservative on some things and really liberal on others and it would be hard to say that I vote, in the things that I deal with, you know, along party lines. We don't have one in Florida. I like to stick together, there are few of us.

J.B.: Assuming, and I don't mean that it is just for the sake of assumption, but let's assume that the public disclosure law passes. What effect do you think that will have on candidate recruitment so far as the Republican party is concerned?

Hawkins: I think that we will have some really wealthy people running,

just as a hobby, or you will have people running that that is going to be their entire income, the legislature or whatever it is, that is going to be their total income and they are going to give everything else up. That's what I hear. We have a lot of them over there say that with the kidnappings and the kooks, you know they just don't want to . . . a man was kidnapped about ten miles from my house, he owned a little shortening factory, but they thought that because he owned the factory, he had a lot of money and he was kidnapped for \$30,000 and held for four days. It's frightened everybody in our community. Telling anything that you've got, it's . . . a lot of people aren't very solvent. They are like a lot of us, they are living on their . . . they don't want to disclose that. I like the bill that you would file your source of income, so that people know there are no conflicts. We have some legislators here that have some pretty big conflicts.

J.B.: This current bill that they are debating now is a source bill, more than an amount bill?

Hawkins: It has gotten down to that. We got a nineteen page amendment to it this morning. I don't know where it is going to be. I think that we should have source, because I don't like conflicts and I see so many. But how can you legislate morality? You're going to lie about returns, you know, where your money comes from, they are going to lie anyway and take their chances. An income tax filing thing. I wouldn't be opposed to it, it isn't going to hurt me, but it might hurt somebody else. You know, for the safety, etc. It's such a crazy world. There was a man and his son killed last night where I live. A really nice couple, we have seen them over at the restaurant where

we eat, and the paper says that these three boys drove up to the service station that he owned and he didn't clean their windshield and they shot them both. It's just crazy things, you know, in a little bitty town like I live in. So, a lot of people are afraid to get in public life today. People that I thought four years ago would be stars by now don't want anything to do with it. They see the stigma that's becoming associated with politicians, they are just kind of marking time. I think that it will be over in ten years, I think that even by '76 it will be different.

J.B.: What effect do you think that Watergate is going to have on Republican development in Florida and in the South?

Hawkins: It isn't going to hurt us in Florida. I see the trend, we have had bigger Lincoln Day dinners and gotten bigger fund raisers, I went to a dinner the other day that had eight hundred people. It's just amazing. That was the second fund raiser of the year, and we are only about three or four months into the year. All of us this year have noticed big attendance for our fund raisers. I think that the feeling is that you can't ~~makexxxx~~ let this make you a one party state again, or a no party state. There's no such thing as a one-party state really, it's just a no-party. When I first became active in politics, there were Hollings Democrats or Burns Democrats, you know, their allegiance was to the individual and not to the party ever.

J.B.: How about so far as candidate recruitment?

Hawkins: I don't see that Watergate is going to hurt us. Again, we have the advantage, if you want to call it that, of the cabinet being almost entirely under grand jury investigation. Which Kirk . . . he used to call them "the seven drawfs" when he was in a bad humor.

They used to frustrate him so. "They've got their hands in the cookie jar." He'd say that all the time. The other day, Nat Reed, who is the assistant secretary of the interior under Rogers Morton and who was Kirk's environmentalist here, now he's gone to Washington, he came down and gave us a speech and he said, "You know, old Claude used to say that they had their hand in the cookie jar. We didn't know it was up to the elbow." (Laughter.) It's bad that you have to trade on people's bad luck, it's not going to prove a plus, we've got lots of bad publicity because of the national publicity on Watergate, but in Florida, the polls show us that people would still vote for Nixon again, over McGovern if he were running. They don't condone any of the dirty tricks, or the illegalities or any of that, but at the same time, the Democrats getting themselves into trouble, I think that it is going to just kind of wash out. A lot of people don't want to do anything. They say, "This just isn't the year. I'm going to sit this out." I think that we will pick up a seat, a House seat. Gunter's seat should be a Republican seat, down there in Lake. It would have been last time. Again, it was a left over feud from the '70 campaign, Cramer's aide ran. There was too much identity, you know. We should have had again, a fresh face. You can't be somebody's aide for sixteen years, I don't think, and then step out and be the candidate and look fresh and new. He's a has been, as far as the people are concerned.

J.B.: I take it that you think that Guernsey is vulnerable in a Republican primary?

Hawkins: Well, not if he isn't indicted.

J.B.: Only if he is indicted?

Hawkins: Yeah, in a Republican primary. I think that he would be hard to beat if he is not indicted by the grand jury. I find that this other indictment, which was a political indictment that the Leon grand jury gave him, and was released, it's hard to explain it to people. They feel that Gurney has been indicted. Everywhere I've been they say that. And I say, "No, the judge and the jury voted that that was not an indictable offense, that ~~xxx~~ filing of a campaign-treasurer or whatever it was, it was political." People don't understand that and I'm wondering now if an indictment I saw a poll the other day on how many people thought that indictment and guilty were the same thing. They don't understand that in this country you are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, but lately the charges brought are what remain in people's mind. They don't follow. I know that today I stopped to get a paper and some people said that they don't read the paper anymore, "I've read all that junk I want to read. I haven't read the paper in three weeks." These are educated people. They are just turned off. They don't want to read any more bad news.

W.D.V.: Is the party and the leadership of the party pretty well controlled by people who worked in supporting Cramer? Was there a Kirk machine or whatever that

Hawkins: There was never a Kirk machine. There were Kirk people and now that is pretty well gone. I don't think that you can say . . . there are a lot of Gurney people in the state party. I think they are Republicans, I don't think that they are identified with factions any longer. As far as Cramer, he's Mr. Republican you know, the first one elected and all that. But he doesn't come to Florida very

often. He's well respected. It's a shame that he's not in Congress. He should have stayed. He shouldn't have run. But they don't put their life on the line or anything for Cramer. I think that they were more Republican than those who came in for Kirk.

W.D.V.: It was just his organization, I suppose.

Hawkins: Yeah. You see, Skip Bafalis ran against Kirk and then he endorsed Kirk in the run-off. Kirk and Eckard made the run-off and then Bafalis endorsed Kirk and went into business with him. When Kirk was defeated, they started a bond-banking investment business down in Palm Beach. There are a lot of Bafalis people. A lot of people worked for Eckard in the organization. A lot of people worked for Cramer, but again, I would say that they are more Republican, those that stayed in. Just because their candidate lost, they didn't leave, whereas Kirk's people left.

W.D.V.: How do you think the party's organization and candidates in this state compare with those in the other southern states?

Hawkins: I'm not sure, I see that they have three Republican candidates in Georgia. I was surprised that they could get that many for governor. But I think that we have more work, we are a bigger state (inaudible) we have what I call a sessional legislature, it meets every year, paid adequately and I am really proud of the Republicans that we have. That quality, I would like to see them elect more of, they are really fine, fine people. I think that we would be above the rest of the South and probably growing faster than the rest of the South. We'd have to be. I'm thinking of what states are in the South, and we are way ahead of them.

J.B.: When you first came to Florida, and you went to register, you said that you surprised your husband when you said you were Republican. Then, what did you do insofar as party activity goes?

Hawkins: There was no party actually. There was a semblance of it, but I wasn't interested in being an activist. I had young children. In '58, I got involved in a sewer fight in Maitland, the little town we live in, we were the young people that had moved out in that area that is the bedroom of Orlando and we were just building our house and we were on septic tanks and we thought that we should have sewers, which is a really funny thing. So, we tried to get an appeal to the city fathers, they had been there a hundred and ten years, I know that I remember them old and with white hair, that they should put in sewers now in '58 instead of when the people come. "They are coming." "Oh no, no." They wouldn't listen. We really tried to reason. So, about ten housewives and a couple of businessmen got together and we ran a mayor and two councilmen against them, from our new area against the older establishment in the town. And we beat them, we won all three seats. That was the only way that we could get action, you know. We kept appealing to them and we'd try to reason. We'd take four hundred people up there, which you know ought to do in their little bitty town, and appeal to the city fathers to do what we said and got no response. But we beat them all and got the sewers. That was in '58 and now this commission regulates about 700 water and sewer companies throughout the state of Florida. So, I'm big in the sewer business. (Laughter.) But I didn't do anything partisan-wise until the Goldwater campaign. No, I worked for Gurney in '62. He was our mayor in Winter Park

when I met him. And then we moved from Winter Park out to Maitland. They touch each other. And when he ran for Congress in '62, I ran the Maitland part of his campaign, they came and asked me. I had a little child, and I walked all over the town just pushing that baby stroller. In '64, I worked for Goldwater and Gurney and then in '66, Gurney said that he would like for me to be a key person in his campaign. He sent me off to campaign school, which may have saved his life. He sent me off to, you know, the Congressional campaign school. Each Congressman can send two people. I don't know if they still have it or not. And he signed me up and ~~and~~ the two of us went to Calloway Gardens, I remember, and stayed there for seven days. It was morning, noon and night, you know, and all secret and closed. Senator Roberts from California came and lectured and it was really fascinating for a housewife to get all that professional training. And came back and did such a super job that his opponent withdrew. And so, you know, I wanted to keep on practicing and so I helped Kirk and then became involved in the party and became a precinct committeewoman in '65. And still am. In '68, I went for national committeewoman against two other ladies. I never had it easy. We run it by election. And the former president of the federation ran and the former former president of the federation. The two ran. And Cramer, interesting enough, they were both from the same county, and he had to stay out of it. He felt that while they were selecting a national committeewoman, he had to not to be in that one because he was a national committee man and Kirk was running somebody against him, Nat Reed.

J.B.: What's his role in the party now?

Hawkins: Now, he's a national committee member.

J.B.: I know that, beyond being national committeeman, does he take an active role in the party?

Hawkins: National?

J.B.: State.

Hawkins: When we summon him. You know, he's super busy making pots of money. He's defending the party in the suit with the Ripon society. He's the co-counsel to the Rule 29 committee which I serve on, you know, revamping, looking at all our rules for the next convention. He's the co-counsel and I see him there. He comes down to, I guess, two meetings a year in the state, you know, to our committee meetings. But as far as speaking, and consulting a lot, you know, if you want to know something, he has a brilliant mind, it's the finest legislative mind I've ever met in my life.

J.B.: Do you see any chance at all for him running for office again?

Hawkins: Yes. I think that he's very interested, I really do. I was with him at Boca Raton about two or three weeks ago and he said that he was talking to people at the White House and they were asking about the Gurney race and he said that there was no way that he could get in it, because there was bad blood, but that not to count him out. He is making a lot of money practicing law, but he is first and always will be a Congressman. I think that something gets in their blood. He knows how to get legislation passed. Gerry Ford hired him to help get his nomination through. He's been hired by the House to do some suits, you know, where the House of Representatives has been sued. And both sides hired Cramer to win

the suit and he won. He's brilliant. You know, it didn't matter if it was a Democratic president or a Republican, his legislation passed. And he's a great man of vision. But unfortunately, at the timing. He looks like a politician, you know, if you are going to draw a little caricature of a politician, he is just right there. And he has been in Congress for so long that he acts like it.

J.B.: If Gerald Ford became president, do you think that he would be a cabinet member then?

Hawkins: Probably, yeah. He really respects him, and you know, they served so long together. I thought that he might, you know, even in this administration, before it got messed up so much. He would be great for transportation, he worked a great deal in that. He authored the, you know, Interstate Highway Act. And he knows a great deal about it. And as I say, he is very busy on the big scene in Washington.

W.D.V.: What should we ask you that we haven't asked you?

Hawkins: Well, you didn't ask me anything about women. You're not hung up on women in public office, huh?

W.D.V.: Well, we are interviewing them.

Hawkins: (Laughter.) Well, I'm the only one here now. (Laughter.)

W.D.V.: Well, we're going to get another one when we leave here.

As a matter of fact, we are. Cherry. This is our afternoon for

Hawkins: Gwen is a good friend of mine, tell her hello. I really like Gwen. We girls stick together, you must understand. People ask me that a lot, you know. I think that it is a great year for women to run.

J.B.: Find many interested in running?

Hawkins: Yes. I find them excellent public servants, because they are not used to making bills, you know. They just stay with it and do it like it is. I watch them across the street, the few we have and I am always proud of the way they act. If you do what's right and say what's right, your entire income isn't tied to your success in public life, so, it gives you a little bit of a cushion if

J.B.: Do you think that Republicans in the South offer more opportunities to women for politics than the Democrats?

Hawkins: Oh yes.

J.B.: Why?

Hawkins: I guess that it's the minority feeling. If it is such a big thing, how come the Democrats didn't do it when they had control of the whole act. We've got Elaine Gordon and Gwen Cherry who are Democrats. The first Republican elected in Florida, a woman, was Mary Griswold from St. Petersburg. I don't know how many years she's been up here. Betty Easley is from over there. Bess Johnson was a state senator. We have Lorrie Wilson who was a Republican, she has changed because of the local situation where they had four Republicans running against Democrats and she felt sure that she could run better as an Independent. And she ran as an Independent, but she was a Republican county commissioner when she ran. So, I really do, for the same reason. For many reasons. Women are the majority, but they feel like they have been handled as a minority and so they relate to the minority party. But the structure in Florida is different, you may have already looked into that. Our party structure is one man, one woman for every county, by statute.

J.B.: By statute or party rules?

Hawkins: It was statute. In '66 they changed it, in '68 to party rule,

and they kept it. The Republicans kept it, I think that the Democrats have altered theirs somewhat. They had to because of the national trend that came down upon them. They've got a couple of national committeemen that . . . I don't understand their structure anymore. But it used to be by statute and by statute, we had to have 50% representation at the convention. In '68, by statute, we had to have women, in both parties, but then they changed it to party rule. We have abided by the previous practices, we have 50% women delegates. The Democrats have . . . whatever they had to have. You know, their quota. Whatever, I can't remember. You know, they really were tied up tight, I thought, in the way that they selected everybody. It was a funny state to be in for that presidential primary, you know, the first one. The first time that we had ever had one and everybody was running, and all money was on one or two and then Wallace took them all. (Laughter.)

J.B.: What would happen in Florida if Wallace ran head on in a presidential primary against Reuben Askew? Let's assume for a minute that Askew gets re-elected.

Hawkins: Wallace can win.

J.B.: You think that he will.

Hawkins: Yes, he sure would.

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