

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES COMMANDER “CHUCK” CLAY

CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

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Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 97
Interview with Charles Commander “Chuck” Clay
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Part 1 – Friday, December 21, 2018
Location: Georgia Room, Charles D. Switzer Library, Cobb County Public Library System

TS: Chuck, we were talking before we turned on the recorder, and I think it would be great to start with what you were doing last week over in Germany.

CC: Be delighted. First, Merry Christmas and regards to the Scott family, you and Kathy. Yes, it was just very interesting. Last week, I was invited to a museum with which I have had a relationship, the *Mauermuseum*, or “The Wall” Museum in the English version, at Checkpoint Charlie [in Berlin]. They annually give a human rights award [the International Human Rights Award and Dr. Ranier Hildebrandt Medal]. It is an interesting place because it is right at the wall. It was the first building at Checkpoint Charlie when you came into the American sector, the last building you left when you went into the Soviet sector at that particular checkpoint. It is a fascinating museum on that timeframe from 1962 forward. They awarded the human rights prize posthumously to General Lucius [DuBignon] Clay, my grandfather. He grew up in Marietta, and his father’s [Senator Alexander Stephens Clay’s] statue is on the Marietta Square. He is a revered figure still [in Germany].

TS: I live two houses down from where he grew up.

CC: That’s right, you do!

TS: In a much more modest house, but two doors down.

CC: I would like to have the old [Clay house] myself. But he is still a very revered and well known [person]. History changes quickly, but because of his role and the American role, particularly in the Berlin Airlift, he is still somebody whose name rings a lot of affection, despite our somewhat strained relations on the street level with some of our friends right now.

TS: Not to mention his role in starting the interstate highway system.

CC: Well, that’s here [in America]. You got me back here fast [laughs]. We can go off on why there is an I-20, I-75, and I-85, all intersecting at one city. We can either praise him or curse him to the high heavens now [for the Atlanta transportation network].

TS: There may also be a connection with General Clay of why we had Bell Aircraft here in World War II.

CC: Sometimes, timing is everything. But good reasons all for doing so. But in Germany, they give this annual award. They were presenting it in memory and posthumously to

General Clay. I was invited over. Last Monday [December 10, 2018], I attended the dinner and received [the award], which was very poignant and moving for a lot of reasons of history and just family.

TS: So are you the patriarch of the family now?

CC: No, my older brother is. I'm not sure how I developed a relationship to [the *Mauermuseum*]. In January, they are naming a new academic building the Lucius Clay Hall, [at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina]. My older brother, and rightfully so, [will lead the family delegation at the opening ceremony].

TS: What is your brother's name?

CC: He is Lucius D. Clay III. He is a surgeon, so Dr. Clay. My younger brother, a PhD scientist, is Dr. Colin [M.] Clay [professor and head of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University. My sister is Carla [Lynn Clay] Berry. We will all be there on the 17th of January to cut the ribbon. [The ceremony in Germany] was one where they paid my way over. I would have loved to have us all there, but I was the only one there on this trip. It was a wonderful time and, again, a poignant reminder that the connection between Marietta, Georgia, and Berlin, at least on one level, is alive and well.

TS: Yes, wow. So quite an honor, I think. And you made a speech while you were there.

CC: Yes. In fact, I have my notes, if you ever want to see them. I'll send you copies of just my notes if I can make them more decipherable.

TS: Did you make your speech in English or in German?

CC: They had a translator. Much of the presentation, as you might expect, was in German. Other than *ein Bier, ein schnitzel, ein fraulein*, I'm not sure I know too much more German.

TS: This might lead into one of the things that I wanted to ask you. But before we do that, you were telling me to begin with about all the distinguished people that have won this award in the past. Can you talk a little about the award itself?

CC: Well, this grew out of two things. It grew out of the communist oppression, if you will, particularly post [construction of the Berlin] Wall, and all that symbolized and all that we, the West, symbolized on the other side. That was the genesis of the museum. As it expanded, they have moved in many cases to civil rights and human rights activists, and some other people that had distinguished careers. [Past recipients include] Yitzhak Rabin, the tragically assassinated prime minister [of Israel]; to the wife of Hosni Mubarak [H. E. Suzanne Mubarak], for goodness sake; and a well-known Russian dissident, [Michail] Khodorkovsky; and any number of lawyers, activists, and civil rights and human rights personages, mostly from the European arena. In that group would be

distinguished freedom fighters against communism in East Berlin, and then again human rights activists, particularly from the former Soviet Union.

TS: I just did my math. This would be the 70th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift [June 1948 to May 1949]. Is that why they gave the award to General Clay this year?

CC: That is right. They were kind to do that.

TS: That's fabulous. This might lead into something that I would like for you to talk about. I don't know of anybody that comes from a more distinguished family than you do: a U.S. senator for a great-grandfather, a general who orchestrated the Berlin Airlift for a grandfather, plus your father was a general in the Air Force and your uncle was an Army general.

CC: Correct.

TS: Lucius D. Clay Jr. was commander-in-chief of the North American Air Defense Command, commander of the U.S. Air Force Aerospace Defense Command, and so on before he retired in 1975. I think my wife and I very briefly met your uncle Frank [Major General Frank Butner Clay] once when he was just wandering around our block looking for the old Clay family home.

CC: Right. He mentioned that before he died.

TS: Did he?

CC: Yes, sir. He said he met an interesting fellow. He didn't know who you were. I said, "Well, that has got to be Tom Scott."

TS: But he was a West Point graduate and served in, I guess, every war from World War II to Vietnam, and was military advisor to the U.S. in the Paris Peace Talks in 1971.

CC: Yes, very eclectic.

TS: Right. I noticed that none of your generation have made careers in the military, but I wanted you to talk about your memories of some of these people and also maybe what kind of expectations they had for you, values taught and so on, coming from a family like this.

CC: Well, I don't put one family's [values above another]. Good values are good values. That's fungible across the board in terms of the world that probably you and I grew up with. It's a changing target. My older brother was in the 82nd Airborne out of ROTC, and was several years in the 82nd. Then he took his GI bill and went to medical school.

TS: Good for him.

CC: So he's practicing medicine. I don't think [our lack of military careers] is a lack of either interest or desire, quite honestly, and I don't want to get too psychological here, but while ranks and [military] performance are unique in one sense, in another sense, service is service. It just is what it is. I think we all had, not pressure, but parents who expected peak performance, expected excellence in what you do, whatever that might be: "Do what you do, do what you say, and stand by your word." I'm going to wind back here in a minute, but I think it is very interesting that my dad and my uncle both graduated from West Point in 1942, and my granddad in 1918.

I want to say something about Uncle Frank. He literally landed with the first U.S. forces in North Africa. So he was in combat from November of 1942 until the last day in northern Italy in 1945. During that period of time, he was a Sherman Company tank commander. He fought through the North African campaign. He was captured at Kasserine [Tunisia], killed a guard, and escaped over thirty miles of minefields with ten Americans with bare feet because they took their shoes off so they couldn't escape. He got back in at El Guettar [Tunisia], then Sicily, landed at Salerno, and fought through that entire [Monte] Cassino campaign as a company commander. He was in northern Italy late in the war. He was going up in the front. A jeep came down carrying a badly mangled American soldier. They had radio equipment that they wanted and needed, and they helped provide some additional medical care to somebody they assumed was going to be dead. Thirty-something years later, one of the tank crew tracked him down. That was [future U.S. Senator] Bob Dole [Republican, Kansas]. It is literally true.

TS: How about that?

CC: I tell that only because it is a small world. He [Senator Dole] had them all over at the Capitol for photos and such. But, I guess, what are the chances? They didn't know who he was, had no idea. In fact, [Uncle Frank] thought he was dead, to be honest. He said years later, "I didn't know the guy lived." But I got off from the [original question] about growing up with standards and expectations. My dad always said, "If you want to go to West Point"... and I certainly considered it... "I'll do everything I can to help get you in." But he looked me in the eye and said, "Unless you want to go as badly as I wanted to go as a kid, go elsewhere, because there is somebody out there that would give his right arm to be there."

TS: Wow.

CC: I always took that as sound and sage advice. Part of me still respects [the idea of a military career], and sometimes [I engage in] what ifs, but [life has] been good to me. I think sometimes you break new ground. Two of my granddad's brothers were lawyers, very distinguished lawyers at the time and place, as I understand it, as was his father. One of his brothers was a West Point guy that got ill during the early Philippines years and died relatively young. Then Ryburn was a banker that ran GDOT [Georgia Department of Transportation] for a while years later, and founded the Fulton National Bank (FNB), which for a while was one of the big banks. So those were his brothers.

Then one sister was kind of a story into herself. Evelyn was a *grande dame* and an interesting person.

But it was fun. We took for granted that we moved every two or three years. I just rattle this off. I was born in Florida, we moved to Alabama, then to Virginia, moved to Puerto Rico, moved from Puerto Rico to Nebraska, moved from Nebraska back to Virginia at a different place, from there, to Waco, Texas, back to Virginia, Hawaii, Thailand, back to Hawaii, and Colorado all before I got out of college.

So good or bad, that probably defines in many ways, but it was a great world. If you were on a base—and these are things I really treasure—at 5:00 o'clock when retreat sounded, everybody, every car, every vehicle, every person stops, from the general, to the private, to the wife, to the child. You stop wherever you are and stand at attention. It doesn't have to be rigid. If you're in uniform, you salute. If you're civilian, you put your hand on your heart as the Star Spangled Banner brings down the flag. The little things like that are instilled. We were in a "yes sir, no sir" world. My granddad was a wonderful [person]. I could tell stories all day. But intense—if you looked up the word intense in Webster's, it would be a picture of Lucius Clay.

TS: Senior?

CC: Senior, General Clay, my grandfather. He had that big Roman nose, and these huge eyebrows, and deep, deep, very dark eyes. I don't mean profane. I never heard the man cuss, I don't believe, in my life. But he locked that stare on you, Buddy. When you went to dinner with my granddad on Saturday night, he put on a coat and tie. My dad was certainly [a product of] a "yes sir, no sir, yes ma'am, no ma'am" world. He wasn't my best buddy, but, by God, I knew he loved us. When he had free time, he never played golf, and he never went hunting. When he got a week or two off, we loaded up the red Ford Mercury station wagon, no heating, no air conditioning, a dog, four kids, and a wife, and went to the beach, and he spent all the time with us. So in my mind's eye, he was loving—tough in some respects, but that's the way we all were—tough in a loving way. What do we call it? Tough love I guess is the lingo of the day. I'm very respectful and appreciative of that.

TS: Yes. I wanted you to talk about Marjorie [McKeown Clay] too, your grandmother. Did you get to know her very well?

CC: Oh gosh, yeah. She was the last one of the family. She lived to be 95 years old. You probably know this. My granddad's best friend and roommate at West Point had a date with this woman from Newark. Like the day or two before, classic story, he got sick and said, "Well, Lucius, can you help out a friend here and you please just escort Marjorie to the dance up here at West Point?" He did, and as soon as he graduated, he knew beauty when he saw it.

TS: You look at those pictures of her; she was beautiful.

CC: She was Irish. Her father, John McKeown, was a rough, tough, Irish.

TS: And he owned a business.

CC: Button factory in Newark [the New England Button Company]; by the standards of the time he was a very successful businessman. Like a lot of those first generation Irish, he was a pretty tough guy by all accounts. I don't know. I sense that from my grandmother. If you ever looked and want to know what is an Irish personality, one of her cousins was an opera singer. She had a lovely, beautiful type of voice. When she was high, she had the soul of an Irish poet and musician. When she was blue, woo, that Celtic funk was not lost on anybody—but glamorous and just a delight. Both of those people were classic liberals in the sense of education, the human spirit, and individual accomplishment and demand that you looked right, you said right, you acted right, and you expect everybody else to do so in the same way.

As is so often the case, I know in your situation, you make one or two really good decisions, and that's called marrying up. My granddad was very smart enough, if she'll say yes. He had his little brew from down in "Ma-retta," Georgia. He can't speak Yankee. She's an Irish Catholic from Newark. Buddy, they were oil and water in some respects, but a loving couple. She was with him every step of the way at the height of the Berlin crisis when they thought there really might be war. If the tanks had been rolling, she would have been right there standing hand in hand, literally would have, literally. But that's how we improve in America. You get the southern kid and an Irish immigrant from New Jersey, Newark. One of my undergraduate degrees [at the University of North Carolina] was anthropology. I'm always fascinated with the merging of people and human events and things.

This is getting to a degree off point, but I always find it interesting. One of my nephews got married last winter. In part of my toast I pointed out, as George Will once said, that the last government program that really worked was World War II [laughs]. I agree with that, but that wasn't my point. In 1942 my dad was being reassigned for final training at Tampa, MacDill [Field, U.S. Army Air Corps], B-26s. His cousin, Zaida [Clay Ratterree] from Atlanta, with whom he was very close, had gone to school with a young woman from Tampa up in Mount Vernon [Seminary]. It would now be [considered] a junior college, but was a women's finishing college up in the northern Virginia, D.C. area [and since 1999 the Mount Vernon Campus of George Washington University]. She called. They were talking, and she said, "If you're down in Tampa there, why don't you call my old roommate, Betty Commander?" He thought. "What the heck? I've got some free time. I'm single, good looking, whatever." He called Mr. Commander.

TS: That's where you got your middle name.

CC: Yes, it's a family name. So Betty Rose Commander. Mr. Commander was founder of the Florida Citrus Exchange, which at the time and place was kind of big in Florida. Not [compared to] the Rockefellers, by any means. But she was an only child, and she was his only child. My dad said she walked down the stairs of that house that I'm very

familiar with, because I was born in Tampa and spent some time there. She came down the steps, and he said, "Oh my God!" He said, "I was speechless." This was early 1943. Like so many [couples during World War II], they got married before going overseas. My dad has his orders. They said their "I do's," and he went off to war and came back, obviously, in 1945 or 1946. He was over in Germany for a while after that. But that kind of thing fascinates me, not because it's more important [than other people's stories], because every one of us has a story. In an American case, all of us have extraordinary stories.

TS: What year were you born?

CC: In 1950. In fact, this Sunday will be my birthday, December 23.

TS: All right. Well, let me see, that makes you 68 years old on Sunday.

CC: Yes, the Chicoms [Chinese communists] were pouring over the Chosin Reservoir when the stars aligned for little Charlie, little Chuck, little C.C.C.

TS: So your father was in Korea?

CC: No, he was not. He was stateside. I say that just because that was the timeframe.

TS: Right, right.

CC: He had some involvement, but really was more involved, quite candidly, in large-scale strategic, potentially nuclear, responses in Korea.

TS: We were considering nuclear? Wow.

CC: And fortunately, we didn't. He certainly was not [advocating it]. He was a young officer, and you have to make, obviously, contingencies for everything.

TS: Sure. So why did you go to the University of North Carolina for college?

CC: I was up in northern Virginia then. There was a forum yesterday. It was one of the [Georgia] Senate study committees on the school year [calendar]. Of course, you had people from Six Flags and White Water and Stone Mountain, a number of [recreation areas], testifying there. I gave a couple of remarks. I said, "One of my good high school friend's father owned Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina, Linville, North Carolina. He invited me up when I was like 15 and 16, I think. Summers I worked at Grandfather Mountain. I started at the distinguished position of putting bumper stickers on cars in a tourist resort in North Carolina. I feel your pain, but I worked there." He [Hugh MacRae Morton, the owner of Grandfather Mountain] was a wonderful person. That's a whole other story itself. He was a fascinating Renaissance combat photographer who had been badly, badly wounded. He brought the *USS North Carolina* [to the *USS North Carolina* Battleship Memorial in Wilmington] and he also took all the pictures. He was the

photographer for the university. So whether sports pictures or pictures of Blue Ridge Parkway, Hugh Morton [took them].

He got me interested in [the University of] North Carolina, other than parents, because I really didn't know [where I wanted to go]. I went over one day with him, and, for whatever reason, it captured my imagination. When I was coming out of school, I won't say I was shooting for stars because I wasn't going to Harvard, or Princeton, or Yale, or Stanford. But it was a fine school that I was very proud to get in. I got in on late admission, and a lot of it was because Hugh Morton went to bat for me. I thrived personally during my six years [at UNC]. That's not because of academic reasons [that it took six years]. Chapel Hill was just a very seminal and gelling experience in my life, as college is for anybody. But I became such a far better student in college—and that's probably not unique—than I was in high school. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and I'm proud of that.

TS: Six years because you were changing majors?

CC: No, six years because I was a head chef and ran a restaurant for two years after I got out of school before I went to law school. I worked there through school, like a lot of kids. I should have graduated in 1973. I was on track for a double major, which was history and anthropology, history of Africa and the Middle East and the archeology of North America in my anthropology degree. But I had a terrible case of mono my senior year. I didn't withdraw, but as you know, colleges gave you incompletes. So I had to come back and finish two to three courses and graduated officially in 1974. I was working full-time at that point in time at the restaurant and then ran it for another year. So I spent about six years working at the restaurant, the oldest restaurant in existence in Chapel Hill, the Carolina Coffee Shop. It is still there thanks to me [laughs]. I'll claim it every day until somebody come in and proves otherwise.

TS: You mentioned Hugh Morton. Explain about him.

CC: He was very hardscrabble. Avery County was probably the poorest most rural mountain county in North Carolina. There were a number of brothers, all very successful. Hugh came back from World War II, and I guess his parents died. He wound up getting what everybody thought was this worthless [property]. Nobody went to Grandfather Mountain. It was thousands of acres of a mountain.

TS: Oh, okay. So he owned Grandfather Mountain.

CC: Lock, stock, and barrel. But he also became a developer in Wilmington. He brought the *USS North Carolina*. He headed up that project. Later in life he also headed up [the effort to] move the Outer Banks Nags Head Lighthouse when it was going to be washed under. He led up the endeavor. He ran for governor. He and Skipper Bowles [Hargrove "Skipper" Bowles Jr.] were friends, that type of that generation.

TS: Wow. Okay. Why history and anthropology? Is that what your passion was?

- CC: Yes, both of those.
- TS: Given your family history, you had good reason to be interested in American history, but why Africa and the Middle East?
- CC: The reason is I knew the least about them. I wanted to make myself learn something new. I've always had a passion for archeology, more classical archeology, but I knew less about North American archeology. I had dated in college, for a little aside, a woman named Amanda Whiteshirt, a Northern Cheyenne from Lame Deer, Montana, a beautiful, lovely woman, and very much an activist. So I had an interest. I've always had an interest in history wherever I might be. I kind of said, "Let me figure out more about this." That was when the AIM [American Indian Movement] was just getting underway [founded in 1968] and Russell Means and others. I'm talking about the early 1970s. I had all the AP [advanced placement] credits that I could get, and I just was taking both these courses. I said, "Why not go ahead and just get two majors?" One was allied courses for the other. I think it made me a better person, wiser person.
- TS: Of course, that is an age of activism, the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- CC: To put it mildly.
- TS: Were you an activist?
- CC: Yes, I think we all were. I was a paperboy when John Kennedy was killed, and I can remember sitting on a corner in Alexandria, Virginia, up there. It was just like out of a script. They gave us about fifty or one hundred extra newspapers. I sat at an intersection, "President dead in Dallas." I sold those papers in about twenty minutes. I could have sold five thousand of them and retired. I don't mean to make any humor out of an awful scenario, but, yes, I think it's in my blood. If you look at the 1918 yearbook of my grandfather, one of the comments in the description for the senior write up was, "Clay is somewhat of a Bolshevik." He didn't mean a commie; he meant a revolutionary. He did not stand well for stupid rules, and he wasn't going to break and bust. Damn near got him bounced out for demerits his senior year. You've read this. Sneaked a phonograph into his room. Oh, my god, you would have thought he committed mass murder.
- TS: I was going to say that there is an excellent biography by Jean [Edward] Smith [*Lucius D. Clay: An American Life* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1990)]. He talks about all these things. According to Smith, Lucius Clay "graduated first in his class in English and history, but ranked at the bottom in conduct and discipline." In fact, I think they actually sped up the graduation because of World War I.
- CC: They did. They were half class.
- TS: I think Jean Smith said, if he hadn't graduated a year early, he may have been kicked out for demerits.

CC: He may well have not made it. That is exactly the human he was. When we sat around tables at dinner with my father and my grandfather and my uncle—we all spent time up at their beautiful place in [the town of] Chatham on [the southeastern tip of] Cape Cod, Massachusetts—the discussions were always about history and current events. My dad was an Air Force guy, but he had a real interest in old cavalry posts. Maybe that was part of my interest in archeology in North America. But you could sit and listen to my granddad say, “I sat in a room with Joseph Stalin at the Moscow Conference,” the follow up to Potsdam [December 1945]. “I’m sitting there saying, ‘I’m talking to a guy who’ll get up in the morning and kill more people in a day than we lost in World War II.’”

TS: Yes, mass murderer.

CC: Mass murder. It’s just a creepy sort of thing. At the same time, he could tell you about, we certainly know Ernst [Rudolf Johannes] Reuter, the mayor of [West] Berlin [1948-53], but Ernest Bevin, who was the British foreign secretary [1945-51], was an out and out socialist, yet he and my granddad were inseparable. Why? Because he had an internationalist view about Germany. He was the first statesperson to come out saying, “We’re not leaving Berlin,” before the United States did. Ernest Bevin was speaking for the British government as foreign secretary, saying, “We’re not leaving.” So [my grandfather] admired him immensely and didn’t worry about the politics. He was looking at the character.

TS: Yes. You didn’t have long hair in college did you?

CC: I’ve destroyed all evidence [laughs]. Are you kidding me? We all did. There’s two things ...

TS: How did you go home?

CC: Well, I didn’t for a number of years. My dad was in Vietnam, and they lived in Thailand. Certainly, I’d go. Well, you know, they had a rule of if I was going on a base, I would have to get an ear trim or my trim now that, at the time, would have been passable. But yes, you go for a year or so without a haircut.

TS: Did you have a beard?

CC: I tried for a while, but my college beard was not a girl magnet, a “babe magnet for Chuck.” I was going to say, let’s get the record straight here: political activism, yes, long hair and some of those things. I lived in blue jeans and t-shirts, not grubby, but blue jeans and t-shirts. That was the time and frame. But you had the activist side, but you also had the blunt part, which is, where are the women? I saw the women were going after the longhaired guys. But I got involved on the activist side to a degree. I thought the war [in Vietnam] was stupid because we were losing Americans for nothing. I also just despised those who would talk about, “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh” and Jane Fonda and that type of stuff. That was not me. I want to make real clear on the record it was not.

- TS: Did you have any problems with your father over your views on Vietnam?
- CC: You know, I was going to enlist during that [war] because I guess I felt that moral obligation. My dad said, "I'm not ever going to tell you not to serve your country, but my advice is don't." He said, "If you want to do ROTC, and you want to spend some time in there, it's a great career." But I think it was heartbreaking. I know it was heartbreaking for people like my father to be in command of a scenario that he dad gone sure well knew that we weren't out to win, and at a certain point in time, weren't going to win. He said, "Don't go prove a point for my behalf." So, yes, he made it real clear at a certain time and place, when I didn't come home in a coat and tie from an airplane, he almost sent me back.
- TS: Yes, I understand.
- CC: So that type of thing, yes.
- TS: I always thought [Georgia Senator] Richard Russell gave the best advice to Lyndon Johnson. "Don't get in, but if you get in, go in to win."
- CC: My simple mind, that's where I was at that point and place in time.
- TS: Yes. So you weren't running the Young Republicans at UNC then?
- CC: No, no. Again ...
- TS: Even though your grandfather was leaning in that direction towards the Republican Party.
- CC: Well he certainly did later in life, but he grew up obviously in the shadow of ... He would have told you he was a southern populist liberal Democrat, [like] his father, Alexander Stephens Clay. I forget the ultimate history, but Tom Watson and Senator Clay saved the Democratic Party by pulling the Populist movement at the turn of the century into the Democratic Party.
- TS: Watson went off the edge later on, but there was a time when he showed a more liberal side. The definitive biography is by C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (New York, Macmillan Company, 1938). It makes your point.
- CC: He was a giant in times and places when that really could have fractured into a much more radical, agrarian, quasi-revolutionary party. But he [Lucius Clay Sr.] worked with the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] for years [as the Corps of Engineers' chief spokesman in Washington]. He served under Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. They were not personal buddies or anything, but we know how close they were philosophically. Eisenhower is what got him to be a Republican, just pure, plain, and simple.
- TS: Did you ever visit Marietta growing up?

CC: Never. In fact, my granddad was not one to reminisce. Some of that may have been, you know the family had some very painful parts. I think when his mother died, and his brothers and sister were all dead and gone, I don't think he wanted to dwell on that. But I was maybe a pre-teen, and I was wondering, "Why is he always trying to grow a peach tree up here in Cape Cod?" I finally asked him one day, and he almost looked like I was an idiot. "Reminds me of home." I thought home was New York City. But no, I had not. I knew the name when I went to the University of Georgia. But I had never been here until the day I walked over, and Herb Rivers [Solicitor General A. Herbert Rivers] gave me a job.

TS: Is that right? Tell me, why did you go to law school at the University of Georgia? You had run the Carolina Coffee Shop for a while.

CC: That's why. I needed a break, and I knew full well if I stayed in Chapel Hill I was kind of set. I probably would not have adhered to my studies. But a large part of it was that North Carolina in 1974-75 was still pretty small. Charlotte was the biggest city [population of 241,178 in the 1970 census, the 60th largest U.S. city], but it was still very insular at that point and place in time, even Myers Park. So Atlanta was still the hub in my mind for opportunity. I was interested in law. I knew my granddad's brothers were lawyers. So I was lucky enough to get in.

TS: You were Phi Beta Kappa, so you shouldn't have had too much trouble getting in.

CC: Well, this is another funny story. I was living at a farmhouse at the time and didn't have a phone. I happened to be at work. You talk about getting in. My grades were way above average. My boards were average. They weren't bad, but they were average, and I was not from Georgia. So the three of those together; I'm sitting on Thursday at the coffee shop, running it as a mild mannered chef, wearing my red hat. The phone rings, and they say, "There's a call here for Chuck Clay." My parents were in Thailand. They weren't calling me. I didn't have a phone. It was the University of Georgia, asking, "Would you like to go to law school?" Of course, my thought process was, "Why do you think I put the application in, dumbass?" That's something you think, but don't say. I said, "Of course, I do. When do I need to be there?" "Monday morning." So I was the last person to get into the class of 1978 at the University of Georgia Law School, not the first, the very last. I got in on Thursday and started classes on Monday, not even knowing where the law school was.

TS: Wow. That's a story. Okay. You graduated in 1978 from law school. Then Herb Rivers was the solicitor general of the state court in Cobb County.

CC: Yes. Paul [F.] Cardin had been the first. He was appointed. Paul retired or resigned and went up to Cherokee County—a great guy; he's still up there. Herb was just coming back from that horrible, horrible traffic accident. When I say just coming back, he almost died. He was a testament to courage. He was so happy-go-lucky you would never know it. But [after the accident] they said the best he could ever do was make broomsticks. He went to acting school to learn how to speak and act. He went back to law school to re-

learn the law. He took every kind of rehab from speech therapy to physical therapy, all that for several years.

He got that job as the solicitor, and he ran and was re-elected. He was ultimately defeated, but it is a wonderful story. Herb is a little known secret. I know not all has been happiness with many and some, but I have a soft place in my heart and always will. Herb was not only a boss, but a friend. When I lost everything I owned in a fire and was standing out in the freezing cold with a pair of blue jeans, a Red Cross blanket, and a pair of tennis shoes tied to my feet, Herb Rivers drove over and got me and took me home to his house just to thaw out and get my feet back on the ground. So did the Cobb County Bar [Association] and folks like Roy [E.] Barnes, Steve Thompson, and Charlie Ruff [Charles Jackson Ruff Sr.]¹ Charlie Ruff was a commissioner and owned Charles J. Ruff Store for Men down there on Bankhead Highway. They took me down on a Sunday, and Charlie opened it up. The bar, all from Herb, Roy [Barnes], Richard [L.] Moore, [Thomas J.] Tom Browning—I could go down this list—said, “Get everything you need.” I literally didn’t have a pair of pants at that point in time.

TS: What year was that?

CC: It was 1980. I was a solicitor making probably, what, \$13,000 to \$14,000 a year. I skyrocketed from \$12,500 to maxing out in the solicitor’s office, I think, at \$13,000, but they all got me clothes when I had nothing, literally, a clean pair of pants and a shirt. I told Roy I did not go out trying to be highfalutin, but the only pair of shoes there that fit me, and I still have them now, was Allen Edmonds, the most expensive pair of shoes I’ve ever had. Roy was trucking around in his \$8 Hush Puppies. I said, “I want you to know, Roy Barnes, you have bought *me* the most expensive pair of shoes that I’ve ever had and will ever own. The only thing I can promise you is I’ll be buried with them or in my urn with my ashes [laughs]. So you’ll get your money’s worth.” So those guys, they are wonderful memories. But Herb was a great guy in finding young, ambitious, passionate, and enthusiastic [attorneys]. You go down that list from [Stephen C.] Steve Steele to Larry [Wayne] Yarborough, [M. Russell] “Rusty” Carlisle [Jr.], Ray [Burke] Gary [Jr.], Roger [J.] Rozen, [Robert F.] “Bob” Webb, Richard Kuniandy, and [James W.] Jim Richter. I don’t need to get all of them down, but every one of them wound up being truly [outstanding], from judges to distinguished and successful lawyers. Herb Rivers brought them in.

TS: Did you apply or how did he find you?

¹ Barnes, Thompson, and Ruff were young political and civic leaders at the time in South Cobb County. Barnes was a member of the Georgia Senate from 1974 to 1990, a Georgia Senator from 1992 to 1998, and governor of Georgia from 1999 to 2003. Thompson served in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1980 to 1990, and then replaced Barnes in the Georgia Senate from 1990 to 2014. Ruff was a Cobb County Commissioner from 1977 to 1981.

CC: Well, it's funny because even though I got through law school, they couldn't quite beat the liberal arts scholar out of me. I'm very appreciative [of my law degree]. It has opened up all the doors. But I can't say my intellectual experience at the law school [was that great]. It wasn't bad; it just didn't light my boat. I knew I didn't want to be in a big tower somewhere and a cubbyhole. That's just not what I wanted to do, and probably wouldn't have happened anyway. So I was literally out of school. I graduated and passed the bar. Back then you could take them at the same time. There was a lawyer and environmental scientist over there that I had worked for in the summer. There was a legal paper I was working on for him. He was getting a divorce and asked me whether I would get him divorced.

So I graduated, got sworn in the bar, got paid \$250 the day of an uncontested divorce, and had seen a little want ad on the want ads board. I didn't have anything at that point in time. It said, "Solicitor's office, assistant solicitor, Marietta, Georgia." I guess there was a number, and I called. They said to come over, so I got my \$250, got in my truck, drove over, met with Herb that afternoon, and we all went up to the Square or somewhere. He said, "We're going to offer you the job." "Thank you, Lord," [I thought]. He was such a neat guy. I thought, "Wow, this is like the Carolina Coffee Shop with law degrees, man. I've died and gone to heaven." But he said, "When can you start?" I said, "Oh, I don't know. What time is it? Five days from now?" [laughs] So I did everything the day before—loaded up everything I owned, came over, and started a couple days later in the solicitor's office. It was wonderful! The people were great to me. It was sort of like North Carolina. That job at the very bottom rung of the prosecutor's office was a window opener for me.

TS: How long did you do that?

CC: I worked for Herb for about a year and a half. Then I went over to work with [Thomas J.] Tom Charron in 1980.

TS: That's when you became assistant district attorney?

CC: Assistant DA. I was a senior assistant solicitor when I left.

TS: When I sent you some possible topics we might discuss, I asked about the Matthews murder case [of two Cobb County pathologists, Warren Matthews and his wife, Rosina Vincenzi, who were brutally murdered at their home in 1971]. No one was ever brought to justice for the Matthews/Vincenzi murders. But that was before you got there.

CC: Before me; I came in the political aftermath. I got here in 1978. Tom Charron beat [George W.] "Buddy" [Darden III] in 1976. That was obviously the political issue that defined that race. Both are good friends, and it is what it is, but Tom had been elected. Everybody said Tom Charron [the first Republican district attorney] couldn't get reelected [in 1980], but he offered me a job. We can talk about hardball politics. I'm not going to bad mouth anybody, but a number of Democrats made it very, very clear, if you take that job, and Tom gets beat, you're the first one out the door.

TS: Is that right?

CC: Yes, because you are going over there knowing what the game is. I get that. It is hardball politics.

TS: So leading Democrats were telling you not to work for Tom Charron because he was a Republican district attorney?

CC: The only Republican DA in the state of Georgia, I might add.

TS: Is that right?

CC: The only. We weren't getting a whole lot of Gem clips from the powers that be at that point in time.

TS: So they were telling you, if you have any interest in a political career, it will be over if he loses.

CC: Yes. It was a school of hardball, which I will always put in positive terms. I learned from the toughest guy in politics I have ever been around in my life. That's Joe Mack Wilson [Marietta Democrat and member of the Georgia House of Representatives from 1961 to 1988 and mayor of Marietta from 1990 until his death in 1993]. We could tell stories about that later, but man!

TS: Yes, I understand.

CC: I know you do. You wrote the book on [the 20th-century history of Cobb County], so you know all these things. We can do it now or expand more on that later. Again, I don't do harmful politics. I'll try to put it with a sparkle or twinkle in my eye and a smile. But we went over there ...

TS: I always enjoyed talking to Joe Mack Wilson. When I interviewed him, I always thought that he was angling for a vote.

CC: Oh yes, always.

TS: He could read you like a book and would try to figure out what you wanted him to say.

CC: Always, absolutely.

TS: I would walk out and think, "This is a fabulous interview." Then I would read it over and say, "Oh, no, this [isn't what he really thinks]."

CC: Not surprised [laughs]. But I got to be around him, and [Harold S.] Willingham [Jr.], and Roy [Barnes] was an up-and-coming Turk, and George Langford [Cobb County Commissioner from 1971 to 1984 and the first Republican elected to the Cobb County

Commission]. So when I went over to work for Tom in 1980, Cobb County landed on the universal Republican map due to Mack [F.] Mattingly beating Herman [E.] Talmadge [for a U.S. Senate seat] in Cobb County.² Sixty thousand votes in Cobb County came in overnight. Tom won reelection on the absentee ballots that morning. At 6:00 AM, I finally concluded I at least had a job in the short-term as opposed to walking out. But all of a sudden, Cobb was on the RNC's [Republican National Committee's] radar, and the national Republicans starting putting some money [into local races]. George Langford and, of course, Earl Smith were mentors in many ways, as was Tom, one of my dearest and closest personal friends and one of the best public servants this county has had the joy of having.

TS: He is still the court administrator for Cobb County Superior Court.

CC: We met over there just the other day.

TS: Whom did Tom Charron run against in 1980?

CC: Sam Huff [Parks Samuel Huff] was running against him.

TS: Oh, really? And that is when the absentee ballots put him over the top.

CC: Put him over the top and put Mattingly in the Senate. I combine them because that's that wind in the sail. It may have saved Tom, but it got Mattingly elected.

TS: There were inklings that Cobb was trending Republican for some time. After all, Barry [M.] Goldwater carried Cobb County and Georgia [in 1964].

CC: Yes, he did.

TS: Ben [C.] Jordan had been elected to the legislature [in 1964]. The Democrats were in control throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but I think you could see it coming.

CC: You could. I could. I don't mean to be a sage, but I always believed in the old Bob Dole school of political parties: "Go look around." To me, it was clear that the future [was with the Republicans].

TS: Why do you think that was so?

CC: In many ways it was the big bubble of influx of in-migration from other places in Georgia, but also from all over the country. This is being a little bit catty, but you could go to some of the Dem [Democratic Party] meetings back then, and it was still "Yankee"

² Editor's note: Mattingly defeated Talmadge in Cobb County by some forty-one thousand votes, but won statewide by just fourteen thousand. So he would not have been elected without the support of Cobb County Republicans.

jokes and other less tasteful things—not all the party, but you would hear [it]. But in the Republicans you had the Tom Charrons, the Johnny Greshams, the George Langfords, and the Warren Herrons out of Lockheed. People don't know what a service Warren Herron did for this county as the chairman of the Republican Party when Republicans were few or none—what a great spokesperson and magnet he was for young people!³

TS: So you're saying that the intellectual level of the Republican Party was above that of the Democrats

CC: At that time, yes, and the outreach. We were doing what the Democrats are very successful in. I give credit where credit is due. We saw what was coming. In 1980 we got on every RNC map. The Republicans were the ones that truly invented the first modern campaigns. They were the first to really go in depth voter ID. They were spending, back then, hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions across the country. Cobb was one of the focused places because of that 1980 election. When I ran for the county commission in 1986, I had stuff at my fingertips that I didn't even know what I had. This was when GOPAC was at its peak, and Newt Gingrich was out there. People can criticize Newt, but I tell you, he gave the very best sort of candidate training of anybody I've ever seen.

TS: Oh, he did?

CC: When I do candidate training, I copy him. I'll say it right up front, "Most of this came from Newt Gingrich."

TS: Of course, he wasn't even living in Cobb County [in the 1980s]. He was over in Carrollton.

CC: Yes, exactly right. That's where I met him. I don't need what I already know. He was a genius. You know this, but he is the best on defining an issue of any human being on earth. He taught me to try and do that.

TS: Okay, so you were an assistant DA for a while. Were you an assistant DA all the way up until you ran for the commission in 1986?

CC: No, I left in 1984 and went to work with just a lion of the old trial bar from Atlanta named Alex [D.] McLennan. He was the guy who broke the Coca-Cola trust. He was also the guy that represented Herman Talmadge in his divorce. He was a tiger. Oh, my gosh! Things just sort of happen in life. I got a call to jury duty as an assistant DA. This

³ Editor's note: Warren Herron was the original president of the Cobb County Republican Association when it was chartered in 1961. In 1962 he ran for a seat in the legislature. Although he lost, he became the first Republican legislative candidate from Cobb County since Reconstruction. Only thirty-one years old at the time, he held a PhD in mathematics and was in charge of one of Lockheed's pioneer scientific computers.

was when they just changed the law, so you didn't get an automatic excuse. I'm like, "Okay, I'll go, and they'll excuse me. They get through [interviewing potential jurors]. They stand up, waiting to get ready to go for the door, and they say, "Have a seat in the jury box." Now, it was a civil case, but he was tried. Afterwards, I don't know what he [McLennan] thought of me, but we started talking.

It was like the coffee shop. I needed something different. I enjoyed what I was doing immensely, the most satisfying and fun thing. I don't mean giddy fun. It was tough fun. But man, I wouldn't trade it, working with the detectives on murder trials where the stakes are really high. For a young person, it was a dream come true. I'll say that was the most fun, most satisfying at a broad level. But I left then and went down and worked for about a year and a half in Vinings with Alex. That was a great eyesight in my mind into some of the giants in the civil trial bar. I met folks. Otis [A.] Brumby [Jr.] was for years a backdoor neighbor and friend. One of his closest friends was Eddie Garland [Edward T. M. Garland Jr.]. Eddie would talk like me. He would always have Eddie over just before Christmas. Otis would call me and say, "Please come down and join Eddie and myself. If not, he'll talk to me all night long, and I'll never get away." They were roommates and very dear friends. So I got to know people like that. Of course, he is a criminal lawyer, very famous, and a very fine one, fine man.

But those are all the little millions of interconnections that wind interesting people into your life if you have your eyes open. Sometimes you just take the risk. Sometimes they work. I have run a Congress race that failed that I thought that I should win. So I've had highs and lows. I don't bat 1.000 or even have 20/20 hindsight, but sometimes these are the things that make life interesting. But going back to 1986 [and the race for a seat on the Cobb County Commission], [Joseph Conrad] "Butch" Thompson had said he was retiring. If you remember, he had a very public announcement and cheers off and all this type of thing. I had gone to Butch, who I considered a good friend, and still do. I informed him that, "I would like to run for your slot." Joe Mack Wilson gave me [some advice].

TS: You were in the Kiwanis Club together, weren't you? Is that where these discussions would take place?

CC: There were a variety of arenas. That was one. Ask me sometime about the marble in the old [Senator A. S.] Clay statue [on the Marietta Square]. I was feeling full of vinegar and venom, when I was in the DA's office in 1984. I think Terry [D.] Lawler and Steve Thompson had just been elected, Steve in 1980. I was Steve Thompson's campaign manager in 1980.

TS: Were you really?

CC: Yes, a wonderful guy and a dear, dear friend. Terry Lawler had just come on in 1982. Maybe in 1982 or 1984, there was a new legislative seat, and I had talked about running. Joe said, "Let me just give you some advice." And it was the right advice. "You've been over there around that courthouse for six years now. Since you know everybody there,

and they know you, you think you're a hot shot. You need to go out." This is one of the reasons I left. Not for that alone. I wanted an opportunity. But he said, "You need to be out in the civilian community. You need to get a real job outside the courthouse. You need to get your friends and know your contacts over there."

TS: That wasn't a real job?

CC: Well, it was a real job, but it wasn't a political segue, and he was right. The two years gave me a segue to work the Chambers [of Commerce] and work the Lockheed folks and the union halls, and do all the things that you had to do back then. One of my favorite places was the [Machinists] Aerospace Union Hall [on South Marietta Parkway] because I had been in the AFL-CIO. So when other people were trying to run and come in there, man, I would just go up there and hold up my union card.

TS: When had you been in the AFL-CIO?

CC: I forget all my years now, but about 1970, 71, 72, or 73.

TS: Right when you were in college?

CC: Yes, I was out in Hawaii. That's pretty much a closed shop, but I had a wonderful job on a contracting crew that I had gotten out there. I was making money and living in Honolulu with my mom and dad. It was gorgeous out there at Hickam [Air Force Base].

TS: In other words, to have a job, you had to be a union member?

CC: To have my kind of job, you did, but I was making something like \$8.10 or \$8.20 an hour, when most of my friends were making \$2.25. You talk about living large, man. I'm thinking, I love this AFL-CIO stuff. Sign me up, brother [laughs]. I'm getting way off, but I always love to tell it. You had to make two, three, whatever, visits to the union hall a year. My first visit down there, my union steward was a guy named Elmo Sampson. Elmo was about a 380-pound Samoan Hawaiian, and he had two equally petite aides, if you'll say [laughs]. I love democracy because Elmo would come in, and we would announce the agenda. He would say, "Any debate and discussion?" Never heard a word. "Call for a vote," and every hand went up. "Call for the nays." I said, "Now, that is democracy. That Elmo knows how to run a meeting, man." I've wished I could do it ever since. That was an aside, but I love it.

TS: So you can go to the union halls and be one of them.

CC: Yes, but Joe was right though. It was good advice.

TS: Even before you knew you were running, you were already out going to all these places?

CC: A lot of it was Kiwanis, or crossing paths, or civic, or church, or whatever. But you need to broaden your horizons. I think it is very sage advice. I still tell it to young folk. The

only real exception I saw to that was Jack Vaughan [John Dixon Vaughan Jr., elected to the Georgia legislature in 1988 at age 27, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor in 1990, and died at age 33 in 1994]. We will never know where he might have gone. But everybody wants to get elected *now*, the earlier, the better. The state legislature is a part-time job that is the death nail of so many good careers because they stay a little too long. You're not a real lawyer, you're not a real politician, you're not a real CPA or even a salesperson. All of a sudden, you ask, "Where do I go?" It is panic time. How many do you see that lose an election or something happens, and they are like deer in the headlights? So Joe would always say, "Go out and practice law. You need to build yourself a practice." He was right.

TS: Wow. So he was actually given you good advice [even though you were a Republican].

CC: Good advice. Joe was good for that. He was hard. Boy, when he liked you, he liked you. When you were a political opponent, I don't mean it personally, but he let you know that too.

TS: Yes, I understand. So he didn't hold it against you that you were a Republican?

CC: Not then. Actually, in that year, I helped Joe's campaign. It would have been in 1982 that he had the first Republican [opponent], Laurie Davis, an attorney. He was a fine guy, but he wasn't my cup of tea. I helped, not profoundly, but I very publicly supported Joe, and he was appreciative for that. We didn't get into the partisan side. I didn't say to support Joe because I was a Democrat. I said to support Joe, which is absolutely true, because he was a wonderful representative for this community that delivered [for the people]. We could go on and on about what that man and a couple of his friends delivered for this county. So I proudly supported him and was happy to support him. He was still giving me good advice. I hadn't become an opponent at that point [laughs].

TS: We have buildings on both of our Kennesaw State campuses named for him.

CC: You better believe it; well-earned and deserved.

TS: So at any rate, you were telling that Butch Thompson said he wasn't running for reelection [to the county commission].

CC: Oh, that's right. Got way off. I went to talk to him and said I would like to run. I gave him my background and all the reasons why I was running then. But it was an open seat, I thought. Sort of like my [college study of] Africa, the Middle East, and North American archeology, I thought, I don't know where else I might go, but you are going to know your community as a county commissioner. You will know Cobb County.

TS: At that time, we had a commission chair and two commissioners from the east and two from the west. I guess you were living in Marietta west of wherever.

CC: Yes, I-75 basically. So we were pretty far in the campaign, I guess, and Butch changed his mind, which is fine. That was his right. He was an outstanding public servant, I believe one of the better commissioners we've had. But I think, again, this is where the opposition came in. I think everybody expected I was supposed to just go away. We were first nice about it, but it became a line that "I'm not getting out, guys." I had a Republican opponent, Dub Newman [William S. "Dub" Newman. Dub Newman was a [professor of architecture] over there at Southern Technical Institute [as it was named at the time], a fine guy, but he was a wonk guy [a person that takes an excessive interest in technical details].

TS: So Newman was your opponent in the Republican primary, and Thompson was running as a Democrat?

CC: Unopposed once he announced re-election, which was appropriate for his stature.

TS: So you won the Republican primary.

CC: Won that, and I think it was a whopping total—this is what I love, and this is why you just have to go with your instinct—I either got or won by 1,500 votes. I think there were less than 3,000 votes cast in the Republican primary. People talk about voter intimidation, and I've got to say this: You know daggone well, when I first started voting [locally], I guess in 1980, I was in Marietta [Ward] 5, off Seminole Drive. But when you went into any of the polling places back then [for a primary election], you had ten, twelve, or thirteen clearly marked Democratic voting boxes. Then over in the corner by the canned beans or something, you had one bright yellow Republican [box]. So if you came in and said, "I want a Republican ballot," it was like, "*Huh?*" [laughs] Everybody would turn and [stare]. So, guess what? [Voter intimidation] has been around for a long time. They weren't just trying to be polite, I can assure you. I don't blame them, but you could do that then. You couldn't dream of doing that now. But I did win. The irony was, I don't remember, but Butch got 15 or 18,000 votes [in the Democratic primary]. People were thinking again, "You're crazy. You can't possibly win."

TS: I guess we should say that East Cobb went Republican faster than West Cobb.

CC: It did, Barbara [E.] Williams [was elected to the commission in 1982] and George Langford [from 1970 to 1984]. And there were several others out there. [William J.] "Johnny" Gresham [Jr.] hadn't been elected yet⁴, but that was certainly ground zero for the Republican swell. That was the first [suburban Republican] area, Indian Hills and all these places.

⁴ Gresham served in the state legislature from 1987 to 1989; then in 1989 he began eighteen years of service (1989-2007) on the board of the Georgia Department of Transportation, including two terms as chairman.

TS: Yes, and Johnny Isakson [state representative, 1977-91, state senator, 1993-97, chairman of the Georgia Board of Education, 1997-99, member of U.S. House of Representatives, 1999-2005, and U.S. Senator, 2005-present].

CC: Johnny Isakson, [president of] Northside [Realty]. Those are all great stories themselves.

TS: Okay. So you were running in the west, and nobody thought you had a chance then.

CC: Right. I say nobody. I think there were some. Republicans were on the rise. I don't think that necessarily even I saw it then. A number of events all came together and pure blind luck, but I won that race because of the work done by the RNC, investing in voter ID, had done. The Dems were still doing the fish fries, the pork BBQs, and those things, gosh, which all dearly love. We were out there with hard evidence as to who was going to vote and most likely to vote Republican. Our challenge was no longer to find enough votes to win, but getting them to turn out because we had the votes.

TS: You knew who voted in the Republican primaries.

CC: But even more importantly, the RNC had invested thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars, going into neighborhoods and phone calling and talking to people about not so much, are you a Democrat or Republican, but what are the issues? The "good ol' boy" system was kind of the buzzword. "It's time for a change from the good ol' boys." Well, Republican if they say yes, but, no, we had gobs of that information.

TS: I've interviewed folks that came here from elsewhere in the early 1960s that couldn't believe that there was just one party that controlled everything. The newcomers weren't likely to have influence in the Democratic Party. The way to really have some influence was to join the Republican Party.

CC: Yes, that's very true. That was the allure for people like me. Just take it on a neutral plate. That would have brought me over every single time. Plus the fact I thought we could do better, not because we were smarter, but because competition helps hone the edges.

TS: Sure.

CC: Wrong or right, that's what we felt.

TS: So "neighborhoods count" was your campaign slogan?

CC: Well, I think Jim Lovejoy thought that up, but I take some pride in it. Nobody had slogans. I was the first campaign in this area that I remember that actually had a slogan on [its campaign signs and literature].

TS: Is that right?

CC: Yes. You can go back and check. That's back when everybody wanted to put their face on the big signs. We put a big slogan. I had a four-letter name [Clay]. It was easy to put on there. This was when zoning was just beginning to be controversial. [The rezoning applications] were coming in by the boatload. Not for a minute am I saying or intimating that Butch ever did anything unethical or that he derived anything other than correct benefits from the job, but he was in the industry. That, combined with the good ol' boy [network], combined with the [growing activism of] neighborhoods, and all of a sudden "neighborhoods count." It caught on. I saw more variations of "neighborhoods are this," "neighborhoods are important," "up the hood," whatever. It worked.

TS: Wow. So you got elected ...

CC: I'll always remember. We were doing a big press conference, and we set up a little booth right there in front of Butch's headquarters on Fairground [Street]. To drown me out, they got a damn small bulldozer. "Err, err, err." You couldn't hear a word I said, but it was a perfect ad. You couldn't have choreographed it better. Everything hit on the cylinders, and I do think we took a new message out, particularly in West Cobb. You have to remember, this is the time the biggest event in West Cobb County was the ice cream social at the Mars Hill Civic Center by the Cobb Farm Bureau.

TS: The county has changed quite a bit.

CC: We loved that Mars Hill ice cream social! Man, was it good—homemade ice cream and pies. It would draw a crowd anywhere.

TS: After that election, both of the commissioners from East Cobb were Republican and Earl Smith, the commissioner chair, was Republican. So you had a four to one majority.

CC: Thea [J. Powell] came in to replace] Barbara [Williams in 1986]. Harvey [D. Paschal] remained [as the lone] Democrat. [The two commissioners from East Cobb] were Emmett [Burton] and Thea. We, technically, had four to one, but the split was not political on that board. You know as well as I do that it was issues and personal. That was a fractured time. I'll put this on me. I don't think the citizens got as good a government with the fighting and bickering. I don't think we did harm, but I think we could have represented the county better, for which I'll take my share of responsibility.

TS: My impression was that Emmett Burton was not the easiest person to work with.

CC: He was very difficult, very tough. He was passionate about what he believed. He never wavered from it. I don't like words like "bully," but Emmett was one of those guys that would up the ante and get in your face. That's fine if it is [directed at] me or even Earl, but I thought sometimes that spilled over into county employees. That, I don't like. They can't respond, you know? They don't have the right to sit there and say, "Stop right there." That drifted into public meetings. Harvey could do it, but his was always a little bit of the chuckly. I think the world of Harvey, dear friend. For that matter, I like

Emmett. I like Thea. She was very wonkish, very much a square peg, but she was the schoolmarm. I don't mean old and dodgy. She was young and attractive, but ...

TS: She was the only woman on the commission at that time.

CC: At that time, she was.

TS: Harriet [L.] Smith came on a couple years later, I guess?

CC: Yes, she took my slot for a few years, and then Louie Hunter won an election against Gresham Howren [former state representative, 1989-90], who had gotten beat [for reelection to] the General Assembly.

TS: Louie Hunter didn't stay long.

CC: No, he was talking about running for chairman and then pulled out of that. But I see Louie all the time, and he is still a good friend. I cherish the relationships that I made. I cherish, most importantly, the wonderful people that I met in county government and later in state government, how hard they work, and how much bang for the buck we get in Cobb County. We have been blessed. Forget politics. The Ernest Barretts of the world, the Herbert McCollums, Earl Smith, and even Phil [Philip L. Secrist] in his own way, served honorably [as Cobb County commission chairs]. Dr. Secrist was a fine guy, but a little out of his element in politics. But he was a little balm of Gilead maybe when we needed it. Sometimes things work as they are supposed to. But [more recent commission chairs] Sam [Samuel S. Olens] and certainly Bill Byrne and obviously now ...

TS: Secrist's election [when he defeated Earl Smith for commission chair in 1988] was one of the huge upsets in Cobb County politics.

CC: The biggest of my life in Georgia politics, along with Roy [Barnes' defeat for reelection as governor in 2002]. On both of those, I was out on the campaign trail when they were running. You hear all this anecdotal stuff from the street, people going, "Hey, where are you on this issue?" You know where they are coming from as soon as they are asking us, "Are you a Christian?" Or, "What is your view on guns?" So, I would get into all this grassroots stuff percolating up. But never in a million years did I think either [Earl or Roy would be defeated]. In [the 1988 commission chair] election, the two most shocked people were Earl and Phil. And [in the 2002 gubernatorial election], suddenly, the two most shocked people in Georgia were Sonny [George Ervin "Sonny" Perdue III] and Roy and myself included. We can argue the pros and cons, but those were shockers to me.

TS: Yes. Well, you were saying that the commission didn't provide as good a government as they could have because of the dissension.

CC: Certainly not as unified. I think for government, particularly that level, I don't want to talk about agreement. I'm just talking looking unified and giving the numbers. I would

be more likely to decide with Harvey [than with Thea or Emmett]. Of course, we were both from the western district, but Harvey and I had a seamless connection. I respected his advice in most cases as much as anybody. The dissension, I think, made people uncomfortable. In that respect I wish it would have been better and easier. We did some remarkable thing. People now sitting [in traffic] up on Barrett Parkway are either cursing or praising us, but people don't remember that was a three to two vote when I was on the Board of Commissioners to build [the Barrett Parkway Extension from U.S. 41 to Dallas Highway] where we did. Harvey wanted to put Barrett Parkway, the West Cobb loop, in the Mud Creek Line [a little further to the west]. People have no idea. "What? This hasn't always been here? This has been here when Rome was around." That wasn't all that long ago. It just shows. Who can imagine West Cobb now without Barrett Parkway or the West Cobb Loop?

TS: I remember I used to go out and jog on Barrett Parkway [in the early 1980s] before it opened up, and wondered, what is a multi-lane road doing out here?

CC: For sure, Roberts Road. Wayne Shackelford [project manager for Town Center Mall] came to the commission. I guess they had had the zoning, but they needed some upscale on the zonings up there on their end. He was talking about this regional mall they were putting in on Roberts Road [first phase opened in February 1986]. I'm going, "Who is this idiot? Who would drive to Roberts Road when they've got Cumberland Mall right down here to go to?"

TS: Town Center would have opened about the time you were running for office.

CC: It was because I know Wayne Shackelford came to talk to me about some things about it.

TS: Yes, he was the one that developed it.

CC: He was the developer [and manager of land development] for Cadillac Fairview [Shopping Centers, Ltd., one of the backers of the mall, along with D. Scott Hudgens Company and Corporate Property Investors]. So that was interesting.

Personally, sometimes I maybe should have acted sooner or not. One of the things I cared about: I campaigned on a code of ethics [for the county commission], and we adopted at least the first permutation. Then Carl [J.] Harrison died, and we can move onto that later. Otis [Brumby] kind of roundly criticized me [in the *Marietta Daily Journal*] for being pablum—my good friend Otis! "Let no deed go unpunished." So proud of me that he put one of his Otis editorials that you know he doesn't write unless it's dripping ink. I was one stop short of being the biggest crook. He said that this code of ethics would just encourage and give an excuse to cover up [corruption]. I'm just kidding. Dear friend. He was right. It didn't do enough. We did not have any Cobb County code of ethics. We started the first permutation draft while I was on the commission. It was completed after I was gone. He was 100 percent for it, but he thought that what I had put in was so mealy-mouthed and wishy-washy that he asked, "What kind of wimp are you, Clay? This is a code of ethics? This is nothing." And he was right, but I said, "Otis, this

is step one. I don't know how to write a code of ethics." [Douglas R.] Doug Haynie worked on that with me and was very good. Towards the end, Thea picked that up. She was probably a much more detailed person than I would ever be anyway. I mean that as a compliment. They got at least an avenue and a venue for which there are some expectations of conduct and some ability to have accountability at this level.

TS: Does this come about because of Burton, do you think?

CC: No. I had run on this simply because one, there wasn't one. There were all these debates going on. There isn't any reason for you to remember this, but out in West Cobb on West Sandtown Road, Charles [W.] Kastner had a development. There was a question. The county ran a sewer line out there. Was that done as favoritism for Charles Kastner? Now [the development contains] beautiful neighborhoods. Well, at the time, it looked like barren land. "Oh, are we running a special sewer out there for Charles Kastner or is it because it is needed?" The answer is, "both." [The issue] had been in the paper a good bit. So we picked up on that, Jim Lovejoy or whoever. I was running on it. Again, I don't want for a minute for anybody to think that I was casting aspersions on Butch [Thompson]. It was a legitimate political issue, I feel, and it was certainly one that resonated with voters and should have. It should have. Leave it at that.

So that was of interest. To me more personally, I had a very good friend whose stepson was killed in one of the last trench cave-ins. The father was a very distinguished OB-GYN here. I knew the family very well. This young man was killed in a trench cave-in, and I just thought that when I was working in Hawaii, I was digging trenches as deep as this room and about half as wide in coral and sandstone. You can imagine how stable that really was, working in front of a backhoe, laying sewer lines. Back then, you just dropped down in this ditch, touched both sides, and either with a steam drill or pick ax, knocked rocks or stone and dumped it in the front end loader that would be digging right in front of you. That is a recipe for disaster. Well, there is perfectly good technology with the steel boxes or the angling of the trenches, that nobody should die in a trench.

I was going to make it a county ordinance. Leaders in the industry—this is a great story of cooperation—said, "Don't pass a county ordinance or state bill. Let us enter into a voluntary program that all contractors either have to sign off or say they have taken this little trench safety course." I don't think we have had a trench fatality since then. I remember there was one cave-in a year or so ago. But it is one of the things I'm most proud of because we were losing a few people every year; in the metro area, more than a few. In the mid-1980s, this was just excavate city. They are all avoidable. Every 100 percent of those deaths were avoidable other than a piece of equipment falling or whatever. But as for the cave-ins, we haven't had any since. That is good government and private industry. We didn't put another layer of bureaucracy. We didn't force them to spend more money, but folks voluntarily came and said, "This is what it ought to look like." They have been not only in spirit, but in letter, really good about enforcing themselves. That is what you want.

TS: I know you spent a lot of time on zoning issues for those two years. In fact, when doesn't the commission spend a lot of time on zoning issues?

CC: But it was Boomtown. I was there on the fabled day when Hewlett-Packard sent the president of the company to get some zoning variations for parking. This is when they were looking at maybe renovating and staying in Cobb or they may have been moving. I would say this with Emmett here and probably with a smile and a twinkle, but he just railed at the president of Hewlett-Packard. They needed some variation for more parking spaces. That was one of their big choking points. Emmett just railed that, "No, we wouldn't do this for a homeowner, and we were not going to do it for Hewlett-Packard." I'm sitting there thinking, "I would." Would you do it for Delta? Would you do it for Lockheed? He probably wouldn't have, to his credit. I daggone sure would have. Of course, we all know what happened with Hewlett-Packard. I'm not saying that was the only thing. It may be more apocryphal than reality, but that story is real. I can tell you that. I was there. That's one time we had a little bit of the discomfort, considering what the president of Hewlett-Packard represents.

TS: Yes, sure. Well, you improved a lot of roads during that time.

CC: It was a huge number.

TS: And CCT [Cobb Community Transit] comes in about that time [approved in a special referendum on June 9, 1987 and officially started on July 10, 1989].

CC: CCT was the same time. Butch, to his credit, campaigned for it. When he lost, I continued that because I was for it. I've been for it ever since. We can talk about transportation for forever and a day. We can't be the 21st century town [we want to be without transit]. Competition is fierce. We've got to have the ability to track young talent. They want transit. You can do it for all the right reasons internally, but if you're going to grow in the 21st century, kids want to live close to work, and they want to be able to park the cars and take buses or trains. I don't blame them. If I had a MARTA line from here to the Capitol, like Roy [Barnes] used to go out there on I-20, at the Hamilton E. Holmes MARTA Station, and get off at the Capitol, I would do it every day rather than sitting in traffic. But we don't. We're not going to go back and build it either, but we can be part of an integrated system.

So, yes, I think for consistency, I'm proud of the county commission, including Butch even and myself and Earl [Smith] from early on, as being supportive of transit. We have not wavered, and that's a testament, I think, to good leadership. Not mostly mine, but like foreign policy, we've been successful with the Berlin Wall. Why? Because we had bipartisan effectiveness and consistency. I think we have been consistent. I'm not comparing the two, but they are similar [in the sense that] this has not been an issue of wild variations, at least since I got here. It may have been in [1965] when the MARTA vote was up. I wasn't here. But it lost by a nose hair [6,869 against joining MARTA and 5,276 for]. But transit is what it is, and we need it.

[During my time on the commission], we completed the first modern, complete, land use map for West Cobb and Cobb in general. It was piecemeal before, and that was a gargantuan effort on the part of staff. They did marvelous work. It's a plan, not a stone marker, but, I think, by and large it has been adhered to. Yes, I would love to have my little alpha male sports car, put the top down, and go cruising out to the Old Mountain Road and out Stilesboro went it was all country, as you well know, or out to the Lost Mountain Store and get a Coca-Cola, then turn back around and driving [back]. That was a good afternoon for Chuck. Days long gone, but, by and large, it is still a good community-based feel. Of course, we've got a number of the historical cities in that area. They provide anchors and permanency and obviously the historical roots that make for a great community.

TS: You seem very passionate about your service on the commission, but I guess the next step is to talk about why you left the commission for the legislature.

CC: Survival; Darwinism at its best.

TS: Really?

CC: Carl Harrison was a good friend. This sounds somewhat self-serving and melodramatic. I knew him only because we became friends on the Republican side. He was a marvelous man, and I was young and ambitious. Carl Harrison was one of the icons on our side, and rightfully so. Otis Brumby always used to tell me, "Carl Harrison is one of the finest people you'll have the ability to know or work with." I take that as high, high praise for a man in my true pantheon of heroes up there. So is Otis Brumby. But Carl is right up there, the finest of the fine. Carl had the first heart transplant in Georgia.

TS: Oh, I didn't know it was the first.

CC: Yes, first. He lived for about a year, year and a half, but Carl always smoked those stupid little cigars. Not that he was a big partier or anything, but he loved his politics, and he was good at it. He was a wonderful representative, and I think he put too much pressure on a new ticker. About a year, year and a half later, he died. At this point in time, I had moved from my Freyer [Drive] home out there to Hardage Trace out on Burnt Hickory, first development. I was living happily as a county commissioner. When he dropped dead, I was actually in Colorado Springs visiting my parents with my then less than one-year-old daughter, my oldest child. It wouldn't have made the news out there, but I got a call from John Anderson and [Edgar] "Bo" Pounds, two characters about whom I can tell endless stories.

They called and said Carl Harrison had just died. I said, "How am I going to get back to the funeral? I'm just out here, and I've got a baby with me." It was a very serious talk and somber. This is probably one of the most personal, meaningful, things that I've ever heard secondhand. I'm going to hope it is true. I have no reason to doubt it, but John and Bo said, "During the last week or so, when Carl was getting very frail and ill, even if we didn't know it, he had told us, 'If something happens to me, I really like'—and these

were his words, 'I really like that Chuck Clay boy. If something were to happen to me, you might talk to him if he might be interested in running.'" Now there may have been others. I'm not saying I was the only one. But those two called me and said that.

I said, "Well, I'm not in the district, John. Of course I'm thrilled that Carl Harrison would mention me, a young guy. It is like manna from heaven, even if I ran or not." But I said, "I'm not in the district. I'm in [Roy] Barnes' 33rd district, not Carl's 37th." He said, "No, we've actually checked." I didn't know this. "We checked the district lines, and your street is the border between the 37th and the 33rd."

TS: So you had been out there such a short period of time you didn't really know?"

CC: I didn't know. I hadn't voted yet in that district. So, no, I did not know. I assumed I would still be voting for Roy because I always voted for Roy in my other home. So, no, I did not. I said, "Well, God's got better things to do than worry about Chuck's political career." I don't mean it that way, but some of the fortuitousness of life ... and I didn't have any money back then. I said, "This sounds terrible guys, but I just can't buy myself a ticket back and forth. Qualifying was just a matter of days later. They said, "We are going to get you a ticket, and we are going to fly you back here to qualify. Then we're going to get you a round trip ticket back, so you can do the hand off, the relay back with your daughter, and fly back and start campaigning."

They did. Maybe my parents would have if I had asked them, but I didn't have necessarily that amount of money just sitting in my pocket to fly there and back. I will always be indebted to those two men. Without that conversation, I wouldn't have run. Without their support, I wouldn't have won. Without their services to this community, both those guys, we would be a far poor place both in terms of service but also just in terms of characters. I guess every community has them, but for one of these interviews, we ought to just get everybody together and talk about a rogues' gallery and [funny] stories. I [often] say, "Man, if I had known this in law school." But if I had worked harder, I never would have [settled for] this job at \$12,500 a year [as assistant solicitor]. Yet, I wouldn't trade it for nothing.

TS: Well, we're up to 1988, thirty years ago now. You have to go to lunch, so I guess maybe this would be the place to stop for today.

CC: Yes. Do you mind? Is this worthwhile to you?

TS: Absolutely! This is fabulous.

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 97
Interview with Charles Commander “Chuck” Clay
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Part 2 – Monday, January 7, 2019
Location: Georgia Room, Charles D. Switzer Library, Cobb County Public Library System

- TS: Chuck, in the first session we got up to the point where you were elected to Carl Harrison’s old seat in the Georgia Senate. I know you served six terms altogether, 1988 to 1998, and then 2002 to 2004. You were Senate minority leader. Somewhere along the line when, I guess, you weren’t in the Senate, you were chair of the Georgia Republican Party.
- CC: Correct; candidate for Milledgeville [state mental asylum] (laughs).
- TS: You know, maybe a good question to start with today that I was thinking about last night is that Georgia really was incredibly late among Southern states in the transition from the Democrats being in control of state government to the Republicans in control.
- CC: The very last.
- TS: Why do you think that was?
- CC: Well, I have to give a certain amount of credit. Georgia has been blessed by excellent leadership, and that goes back a long time. From [Governors] Zell [B.] Miller [1991-99], going back to George [D.] Busbee [1975-83], going back to Carl [E.] Sanders [1963-67], the modern Georgia history is replete with good leadership, and it speaks for itself. We all know the civil rights history and all those things are involved, so I don’t want to say, “Give the devil his due,” because I don’t see anybody as devils. But the credit [for the long control of state politics by the Democratic Party] in part is them. I don’t know why, because this is a state that voted for Goldwater.
- TS: In 1964, that’s right.
- CC: Then we went for another three decades almost before there was a substantive change at the highest levels of the State of Georgia.
- TS: I guess really after 1964 the only Democrat that carried Georgia in a presidential election was Jimmy Carter [and Bill Clinton in 1992 with only 43 percent of the vote, due to H. Ross Perot winning over 300,000 votes that might otherwise have gone to George H. W. Bush].
- CC: Carter. So at the national level the change had been made. It was a state that was still dominated by rural politics. Maybe you could argue the same even now, given Brian Kemp’s election [in 2018 as Georgia’s 83rd governor]. But the rural folks then, you know as well as I do, were all conservative Democrats, yellow dog Democrats, or whatever you

might want to call them. When that switched, I have to give Guy [W.] Millner credit because he was the first Republican running for statewide office [for governor in 1994 and 1998 and U.S. senator in 1996] to sweep rural Georgia. That's when they really came over. As soon as that happened, the handwriting was on the wall. We went to the black max plan, and I was on that redistricting committee in 1990.

TS: The black max?

CC: Black max is what the redistricting plan was called.

TS: Why is it called that?

CC: Because it maximized black voting districts under the Voting Rights Act. It was the one that was eventually challenged—the [U.S. Representative] Cynthia McKinney district as you recall [the 11th district of Georgia, created with a 64 percent black majority following the 1990 census]. The Supreme Court threw it out [in *Miller v. Johnson* (1995) under the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment]. It'll be interesting to see where the North Carolina [gerrymandering] case [in federal court at the time of the interview] goes.

TS: The gerrymandered district that Cynthia McKinney won ran all the way from Atlanta to ...

CC: To Savannah, all the way; when the dust settled out, I understand [why], but it pushed the African American vote into fundamentally African American voting areas that elected a [black] congresswoman, and then everything else became Republican. So all those things hit at a time and place where that which was happening nationally came home to happen statewide.

TS: Right. So even in races for the state senate and state house, because you had reapportioned to create black majority districts, you created a whole lot more Republican districts.

CC: Same there. You can argue what is the best politics for representation, but certainly it created African American districts. That is absolutely fair, but the big, big winner in the 1991 and 1992 struggles in redistricting was the Republican Party. We became majorities almost overnight, even though maybe an election cycle or two away, but in reality.

TS: It really took until [Governor] Roy Barnes got beat in 2002, wasn't it?

CC: Yes, but we had moved to a level up in the Senate, and even in the House, where while it took us until 1999, 2000, we fundamentally were at parity in the House and the Senate. We had had seats, obviously, on the PSC [Public Service Commission] and areas like that, but in 1998 Democrats still won everything, so that is not all that long ago. We had all the high hopes, and they took it from top to bottom on the key statewide races.

- TS: Twenty years ago, yes. Well, maybe you really have already given a hint of the answer to this question, but when I think back on the local level, I don't see that it made a lot of difference switching from the Democrats to the Republicans when you compare, say, an Ernest Barrett to an Earl Smith. Ernest Barrett was the last Democrat [to serve as chair of the Cobb County Commission, 1965-85]. Earl Smith was the first Republican [1985-88].
- CC: No, pretty seamless transition. Honestly, there's a certain fundamental reality to the numbers, and Cobb was not the same place even in the early 1980s as it was in the 1960s.
- TS: Right.
- CC: You know that obviously, but again, that has worked as a blessing for Cobb. We have not seen these jerks back and forth in one direction or another, or bad governors, or gosh forbid, indictments and things that have really just hit. We've had really, truly talented leadership, and, equally importantly, ethical men and women of high character. We are not perfect, but I think you take them where you can get them.
- TS: Well, I may be looking back at it through rose-colored glasses, but you have kind of agreed with me that it really didn't make that much difference what your party label was if you were running for the county commission.
- CC: In a fundamental level it was as much about changing the infrastructure of inside-the-ballpark Cobb County politics. That is where it changed—the appointments, the authorities, the John Andersons of the world that had been toiling. And it brought in some sunshine, fresh air, and you need those changes. We changed the county attorneys from people that I have enormous respect for to new people, simply because, and I said in the paper, "The politics have changed, and we need to have new faces that are entitled, who work for it, to be there." I think it was good.
- TS: Yes, and yet you think of the Cobb Chamber. I guess the joke about them is that they have never seen a tax increase they didn't like, and yet probably 90 percent of them are Republicans. And we saw people like Earl Smith, Joe Mack Wilson, A. L. (Al) Burruss, and Johnny Isakson working together across party lines to get the first Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax [SPLOST] in 1985.
- CC: Correct. Well, but you know you can argue that in a different vein. I think that has been one of the great savings to local taxpayers, obviously. The senior tax was another one that came in. Johnny and a lot of these guys worked on it. You can argue the pros and cons of it, but the Chambers' job is to promote business. It is not necessarily to win elections or to be one way or another. You know that. We could spend time on that.
- TS: I guess where I'm kind of leading with all this is that it seems to me that as Cobb County starts going blue again—Cobb County voted for Hillary [Rodham] Clinton [for president] last time around [2016], and Stacey Abrams this time [for governor in 2018]—it seems to me that the difference between the parties is much greater on the state and local level today than it was thirty years ago.

- CC: Even though it was a fundamental, historic shift. This is more of a shift back than a fundamental one, as you say. We went through 135 years of one-party control.
- TS: But am I wrong about that?
- CC: No, I think you're right. I mean, obviously we'll have to look back at some point in place and time, but if you look at the leadership from a Stacey Abrams campaign to a Hillary Clinton campaign, that is a much greater potential gap or gulf if you will, chasm in some respects, than you ever would have seen between, as you say, Ernest Barrett and Earl Smith, or any of the progeny here local that came out of that change and shift. I mean, Joe Mack was a flaming liberal? No, I don't think so.
- TS: It would be interesting to know what Joe Mack would think about politics today, because he was very much a populist.
- CC: The populists, you're right, in a very traditional strain, but again I'm teaching to the teacher. Georgia Populism of the post Civil War era, late 1800s, early 1900s, was an agrarian, conservative [movement that believed that] government should help, but government shouldn't tax. They wanted what they thought was their fair share, and they were right. "We want greater representation, our voices to be heard," but it was not some [Robert M.] LaFollette [of Wisconsin] or [former vice president] Henry [A.] Wallace.
- TS: Those farmers that owned their own farms were paying the lion's share of the [property] taxes.
- CC: Yes, back then, and they were not happy. But [Georgia Senator] A. S. Clay and [Thomas E.] Tom Watson were the ones that worked indefatigably to bring the Populists within the party. But I think that he [Joe Mack Wilson] would be apoplectic if you compared his populism to some of what we see now.
- TS: Probably so.
- CC: I don't want to speak for the Joe Mack Wilson family.
- TS: It would be interesting to know.
- CC: That's something I would agree with him on 100 percent, I bet.
- TS: Okay. What was it like to be the minority leader in the senate? You had to finesse things to get things done, didn't you, as a minority leader?
- CC: I think as a minority member, over the vast majority of my time in the Senate, it requires that, yes. I always say about a minority leader, Democrat or Republican, House or Senate, it's the only political job that has neither carrot nor stick [laughs]. So your ability to get anything done is going to be based upon only your ability to twist arms, argue vehemently, not loudly, and build bridges. Actually, I enjoyed that aspect of it. I like to

think that I was a serious legislator. I had a goodly number of pieces of legislation pass, none of which, obviously, would have done so without Democrat support, and without the blessing from the Speaker [Thomas Bailey “Tom” Murphy, and [William J.] Bill Lee [chair of the House Rules Committee], and those in the House. But the great thing about coming in as a minority leader, you can either be a back bencher, Newt Gingrich in Congress, who eventually brought success ...

TS: You mean a revolutionary trying to bring the house down?

CC: Yes, yes. A Mitch Kaye [Mitchell Kaye, state representative from Cobb County, 1993-2003]—those kinds of guys; or for us, I wanted to be a serious legislator, *à la* Johnny Isakson or Johnny Gresham, or even the members of the Dems, Steve Thompson, Roy Barnes, and go down the list. Those are people I admired, people I wanted to learn from, and people that I, in my mind, wanted to build bridges to, so I could look in the mirror and say, “I did make a difference in passing a piece of legislation. So just take that and expand it as minority leader. It was an interesting time. We [the Republicans] were full of vinegar and vim. We really felt that we were on the mountaintop. We knew we hadn’t crossed into the Promised Land, but we daggone sure felt that we were on the mountaintop, and that they [the Democrats] were on the defensive.

TS: You could see the Promised Land.

CC: We could see the Promised Land. It took a couple more years than we thought. There was a little bit of the beginning of that shift toward the social conservatives that had bled over [into the Republican Party]. So trying to keep that within balance without burning some of the bridges. Gosh, I wish we had more [bridge-building] now when I look at some of these emotional issues like guns and prayer, some of these issues that just beg [for common sense and compromise]. They are never going to be resolved by government alone, and I think they split more than they sometimes bring together. But we had some real, real talent from the Clay Lands of the world [state senator, 1995-2001], to the David Ralstons of the world [state senator, 1993-1999, state representative, 2003-present, Speaker of the House, 2010-present], and the [Charles B.] Charlie Tanksleys of the world [state senator, 1995-2005, senate floor leader for Governor Barnes, 1999-2002, despite the fact that they were from different political parties].

TS: Who did you mention first?

CC: Clay [D.] Land, who is now a federal judge down over in Columbus [chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia].

TS: Not one of your relatives, I guess.

CC: No, no, no. Very distinguished leader and a great guy. David Ralston was in the Senate with us. Johnny Isakson was in the Senate with us. [Michael J.] Mike Egan [state representative, 1966-1977, state senator, 1989-2001]. He was associate attorney general

[of the United States] under [President] Carter for a bit [1977-79}—brilliant guy. I could go on; I mean that was a talent pool.

TS: You had some good folks.

CC: And Democrats knew it. So [Arthur B.] “Skin” Edge IV [state senator, 1987-97, senate minority leader, 1992-96]—we could go running down the list. Skin had left when I became minority leader, but he was wonderful. Sally Newbill [state senator, 1986-97]. Can you imagine more of a tiger than her? Sally was, oh man, if you want to get in political combat, she would be one of the first you would hire.

TS: Do you think there was a different personality type that would be Republicans when they knew they were going to be in the minority, compared to when it becomes the majority party?

CC: Yes, I think a lot of that is attitude.

TS: They were there for principle?

CC: We were. We really did truly believe that we could bring better governance. Not necessarily to the budget; this was a fiscally conservative state. I don’t need to speak the obvious. But in terms of working with people, you know, [Speaker Tom] Murphy never gave a single position to anybody who was a Republican, not a secretary, not a vice chair, certainly not a chairmanship.

TS: He was about as partisan as you could get.

CC: As you could possibly get, and yet you had 40 percent of your body that was just locked out. That isn’t good governance.

TS: No, it is not.

CC: And I could say that with a good conscience, a clear conscience, and say it in the mirror. It’s not. I think we were more open that way. I think we were more transparent. We were a heck of a lot more inclusive for many of those years, and I say that across the board, in many, many respects than the Dems. Again, you know that. So I do think we felt, not morally superior, but I do think that we felt that we were going to listen to more voices. We will try to build broader consensus, and people will have a better understanding of how their government works.

TS: Do you think you are more sensitive to that when you’ve been on the outside?

CC: No question, no question. I’m not sure I would have been any different had the shoe been on the other foot and I had some big, key position under a committee chairman under Murphy. I’m sure I would be singing a different tune. But I think we were right. I would take the Johnny Isaksons or folks like that. We could go on down the list, but we

really were enthused about what we were bringing—a little bit of a crusade, yes, maybe it was a little of naivety or idealism, yes. That’s good.

TS: Why did you want to be chair of the Georgia Republican Party [in 1999]?

CC: Because I had lost a race [laughs]. Losing always broadens your horizons.

TS: When you were running for Congress?

CC: No, lieutenant governor, and that was really more of a step out that we thought. That was the [Michael Joseph “Mike” Bowers year [attorney general of Georgia, 1981-97, unsuccessful candidate for governor, 1998]. The thing is, when you are the minority, after about six years, you really start getting fidgety, because you’ve got your law practice or business or family or whatever. You ask, “Where am I, what am I doing this if I’m going to be a perpetual minority?” So after ten years I really felt like, I need to get out, get up, or get gone.

TS: So the lieutenant governor, basically, presides over the Senate.

CC: Yes, yes. [Demetrios John “Mitch” Skandalakis beat me in that, primary. So I was open at that point. Nineteen ninety-eight had been a bad year [for the Georgia Republicans]. Rusty Paul was the chairman. Rusty is a good friend of mine. He did a fine, fine job. You just can’t predict the outcome. He was not going to run again. [U.S. Senator] Paul [D.] Coverdell, Oscar [N.] Persons, Frank [B.] Strickland, but mostly Paul [Coverdell], and Stan Wise [played a role in finding a new chair]. I remember Stan Wise, myself, Oscar, and Paul [Coverdell] all met in Paul’s office. I think Oscar was there. He was certainly a key part of it whether he was in that meeting or not. Paul [Coverdell] said, “We have to have somebody who can take control now who will have the relationships with [members of] the General Assembly, particularly as we are close to winning,” and keep one of Coverdell’s people [in charge]. Stan would probably deny this, but I would have said, “Stan, have it.” But he was saying for a variety of good reasons [that he didn’t want to be chairman]. I respect Stan’s opinion. We are good friends, and I respect his political insights enormously.

They made the case, and part of it was bruised ego, that I would be a good fit. I said, “Well, I am not going to do it two terms. I just saw what happened with Rusty. But I said, “I will do it.” Looking back, I’m thrilled. It was a very meaningful part of my life, particularly given the death of Paul [Coverdell, from a cerebral hemorrhage on July 18, 2000]. I would not have been there but for Paul. Taking that legacy to the Philadelphia Convention with a delegation that represented Georgia very well in a very diverse fashion, but also in a way to honor Paul Coverdell. It was a very meaningful part of my political professional life, because he was a great man. A lot of what I had in success was due to Paul and people like that. I’ll never forget it, but that’s how it came about. So I said, “Okay.” As elected officials, you have a love/hate [relationship] with the party. I mean that in a good way. I would say that if my party friends were here.

You want to be close, but you don't want to be too close because party politics is sometimes different than getting elected, to put it mildly.

TS: Yes, yes.

CC: But John Teasley, who was one of Paul's field directors, who died tragically of cancer, was the best numbers guy I have ever been around. I know there were others too, but he was the guy that put convention votes together. I remember we had three people running, and John told me after that first round of votes before I ever counted, that we've won it. I said, "John, if you're wrong, I'm going to kill you [laughs]. We will be out there on that tarmac." I didn't say it in a mean way. I said, "Please, please, be right because I didn't want a runoff fight and a runoff and a runoff and a runoff. And we did. It wasn't a landslide, but well over 50 [percent] plus one to win in the first ballot. John, bless his soul, I give him a belated thank you, and I certainly did many times. John didn't have that much money, but Paul flew him out to that MD Anderson [Cancer Center in Houston, Texas] over and over and over again to prolong his life as long as possible. John Teasley, a great guy, a fun, funny guy, the kind of people Paul had around him.

TS: How long did you serve?

CC: Two years, from 1999 to 2001. So I got to do the hanging chad election [the 2000 presidential election where there was a controversy over the vote count in Florida]. I was a member of the Electoral College as party chairman. Now you know that if two people had changed their votes in Georgia, Al Gore would have been elected president. Georgia was one of a handful of states where you are not bound by law to vote for the winner [of the popular vote in that state]. Back in the days of recorders and you [landline] phone at home, I would receive calls that [said in a whisper], "Chuck, you can still do the right thing. You can be historically a man of character, and vote for Gore." Yes, and if I was getting it, so was everybody else on the Electoral College. But it is funny because the damn RNC [Republican National Committee] was almost keeping us literally under lock and key for fear that somebody would either be bribed or convinced otherwise. Of course, these are the party loyalists par excellence. Nobody was going to [vote for the candidate of the other party].

TS: Nobody would be an elector unless he or she was a party loyalist.

CC: Absolutely, but stranger things have happened. I don't know what [my vote] was worth. Nobody ever offered me anything. I always laugh and say, "I never got that call that said, 'Swiss bank account number x, y, z, z, z.'"

TS: I was trying to think that there were a few electors who voted [for Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia rather than John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential election].

CC: Yes, exactly. So it is not out of the question that those things could have possibly occurred. It was an interesting time. It was an historical time. Again, the Bush election was obviously the cornerstone of my term, though in 2000 we did get enough party

switchers, you remember, to take over in the [Georgia] Senate. We felt we were well on the way. It was not a job I was looking for, but, looking back, it was probably one that in many respects was the most interesting and in some ways a little historical.

There is nothing like sitting on the floor [of the Republican National Convention] as the chairman of your state convention as they were doing the roll call of the states, with a thirty-foot-high jumbotron of yourself. Then you say, “The great state of Georgia, the Empire State of the South, riven in war combined with a dream, casts our ballots for the next president of the United States, George W. Bush.” You can’t get better theatre. Actually, it’s funny because the United States Chamber [of Commerce] magazine, when they were doing their piece on the convention, took a picture of Mack Mattingly, me shouting into the microphone, Mack’s wife, and [Congressman Robert L.] “Bob” Barr [Jr.] for the cover of the magazine. I’ve got that somewhere. I framed it. It’s a great picture.

TS: That’s great. Did you have to do a lot of travel around the state as party chairman?

CC: Yes, you do, and should. That is the working side. There are some great Republicans around the state, like [Jefferson Irwin] “Jeff” Davis [III] down in [Dublin, Georgia, Laurens County], a wonderful man killed in a plane crash a number of years ago [May 4, 2007]. I would have never known people like him [if I hadn’t been party chairman]. He was such a great, hard-working, bridge-building, fun [individual]. He and [Governor] Sonny [Perdue] became very, very close. They were both pilots. He, sadly, was one of his key people down there in South Georgia. But wonderful memories, whether it is a fish fry in Dublin or the Chatham County or Skidaway [Island] Republican Party. But, again, like being a county commissioner, being the state party chairman, you, by golly, learn your state and all the little nooks and corners and crannies, and quite candidly where the gems are and where the coal is.

TS: That would be the ideal time to run for state office after you had done that.

CC: Yes, but things work in strange ways. The timing is sometimes everything. I don’t want to dwell on those. But yes, you wonder sometimes about time and place because we were definitely on a high. If I had stayed another two years, that would have been the Sonny time. But I’m not sure I would have got anything more. I said I would do the two years, and I’m proud of my service.

TS: So you went back to the state Senate for two more years.

CC: Right.

TS: So what happens after 2004? Did you get tired of being in the Senate?

CC: Not tired; I am always respectful of and enjoyed my time, but I never went back again to be a fixture. Quite honestly, a lot of my closest friends and allies—time moves on, and so, suddenly, there is a different route. I got it, but I just didn’t want to try to reinvent

myself again and again. So the congressional race came open [in 2004 in the 6th Congressional District]. Certainly, given my background and family, it probably was stupid in hindsight, again, timing being such. But I just said, “What if I look out, and it is another ten years [in the state Senate]? So I’m going to give this [a try].” I have had a long connection and desired to work in those areas that I still love very, very much, like history, foreign affairs, economic development, and the interconnection between U. S. relationships of all types, and then all the usual [domestic issues] that you want to do at home. I thought I had something to offer.⁵

[Two years earlier, in 2002, when I was elected again to the Georgia Senate] I didn’t go into [the race] to be short term. That is when [Dr. John Phillip “Phil”] Gingrey ran [for the 11th Congressional District seat in the U. S. Congress]. The seat was open [for Georgia Senate District 37], and I said, “Let me put my name in.” I guess it is flattering. I didn’t have any opposition. Nobody else put their name out. So that’s the easiest election, the only easiest election, I think I ever had. I enjoyed going back, actually. It gave me an opportunity. You talk about legislation. I know there are other obvious ones, but the Indigent Defense Bill, while that is not important to anybody, was a game changer for the state. I am very proud both as a lawyer and as a legislator to get something done that people had been trying to do for thirty years, which was to have some fundamental, true constitutional fairness of representation of indigents in Georgia.

TS: We didn’t have that before then?

CC: No, what we had was a mishmash. We had still in many cases judge-appointed counsel from the bench. [Judge] Luther Hames [Jr.] would do that when I was here. Nothing was wrong, but you can’t do that now. Then you had the contract ones, which were in many ways the most abused because you had people that would low-bid to get a contract from the county and never have the resources to represent [a client adequately], even if you are the most ethical, hardworking attorney. Then you had a circuit defender, which was extremely good, still is. But what was happening is you had people who never saw counsel before coming to court or never saw counsel at all. It was one lawsuit away from having another prison outcome on our hands, where the federal government was going to mandate. [Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert] Benham⁶ called me at my law office up here on the Square and asked me to serve on this commission. I thought, “Oh, what have I done wrong to get this blessing? I must have really ticked Benham off.” But I hadn’t argued down there [at the Supreme Court] in a while. I served on it [the commission] for two years. It was a wonderful who’s who from private [attorneys] to the judges to the chief justices. It was wonderful. Everybody said he hated lawyers, but

⁵ The 6th Congressional District in 2004 consisted of parts of Fulton, Cobb, and Cherokee Counties. In the General Republican Primary, the ultimate victor, Tom Price, came in first with 29 percent of the vote. Mr. Clay was third with 21 percent.

⁶ Benham has been a justice on the Georgia Supreme Court from 1989 to present. He was chief justice, 1995-2001, the first African American chief justice in Georgia.

[Governor] Sonny [Perdue] embraced it. We cobbled together a very good bill, not perfect, never are. But to my friends in Cobb County, since it was my bill, there was one thing that I made clear; there was going to be at least one exception. Cobb had a circuit defenders system, which was probably as good as anything in the State of Georgia because lawyers here do support it—the best lawyers here do support it.

TS: Back in graduate school I remember reading *Gideon's Trumpet* by Anthony Lewis [first published in 1964 on the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) that established the principle that criminal defendants had a right to an attorney, regardless of whether they could afford one].

CC: Yes, everybody knows *Gideon v. Wainwright*. That is what I felt we were implementing. We were truly doing something. So I received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Georgia Bar that year, and I keep that proudly in my law office.

TS: So that is why you got the Public Service Award, do you think?

CC: Yes, for this legislation, which was seminal. States are now copying *us*. It never would have happened if I had not been there [on the commission] those two years.

TS: Justice Benham is from up in Cartersville.

CC: Yes, great guy. I was enormously flattered to have a chief justice ask if I would serve on this commission. That's high cotton; I don't care what age and place. It was like folks who want to say when I took my son to see [future president] Obama, "How could you do that?" How could I not do that? [My son] wanted to. Are you kidding me? I wasn't going to vote for the guy, but this was someone running for president of the United States. Come on, man. I don't care if I'm 14 or 44 or 94. I want to be there as a proud American. If the chief justice asks you to do something, as my granddad [Lucius Clay Sr.] said many years ago when he got a bunch of crap [from fellow Republicans] because he had agreed to serve under [President] Kennedy by going back to Berlin [in 1961 and 1962 as Kennedy's personal representative], "I know you guys would probably do something differently. But if the president calls and asks me to do something, there are only two words out of my mouth: 'Yes, sir.' You tough guys; I want to hear you tell the president, 'No' and say you're not flattered. 'Damn screw the president.'"

TS: Well, you also were involved with strengthening Georgia's anti-DUI [driving under the influence] laws.

CC: It is one of the two or three things that I am probably most proud of. Zell Miller [Georgia governor, 1991-99] came in with the sweeping DUI Reform Bill. I had two separate bills. One of them was to reduce the DUI levels in Zell's bill—not because he was soft on it, but he did not include it—from 0.12 to a 0.08. Now 0.10 was technically; 0.12 was the presumptive, and I had a bill to put into it 0.08. I also had the open container bill. As that moved forward at the very end, because Zell had been told that they would not kill the bill, my 0.08 became the law of the land. That is a lifesaver, and I'm proud of it.

Go to one MADD meeting [Mothers against Drunk Driving]. I'll never forget going up to Holly Springs. Right there in front of the Pine Crest Restaurant a young man had been killed by a drunk driver. They were having a memorial with the parents up there. Man, that's one of those road to Damascus [conversion experience] type of things. I was no teetotaler. I was young once and probably over-imbibed on occasion more than I should. But that moved me to think the level should be lower. I went over a million years ago and had myself tested at the sheriff's office. I can't remember whether I had a bottle of wine or six-pack of beer. I started drinking to test myself. When I got to a 0.10 or 0.12, I wasn't a little bit. I was drunk.

TS: Right. So you're saying that before this time, some people that were really drunk would not fail the test because it was set so high?

CC: Well, in my view. They weren't necessarily drunk, but they were impaired. There is no doubt that by reducing that level, you saved lives. The open container bill, I might have got a ton of grief on that, but I've never violated it since. I made this argument. Too often, we see our cars as our den on wheels, a rolling den. Put on your radio, put a six pack of beer next to you by a bag of peanuts, and it is a rolling party. Go over to Athens on a [football] Saturday in the morning. There are more people lined up, tending bar on the side of the road with Bloody Marys. I'm not saying that is necessarily wrong if you're not driving, but to get us away, I think [the law] is a good thing. Now, I've got on my soapbox, but I'm very proud that both of them became law.

TS: What is this thing that they're talking about in Kennesaw now about open containers?

CC: Having outdoor cafes in historic areas. It has nothing to do with driving. I don't mind that; those are two different things.

Another one of my bills had to do with county government as we have it now. We looked at one point in time at two alternatives. Now, I didn't create it, but we were looking at removing the county manager and going to a DeKalb [County] type of CEO, or just reducing the chairman down to a purely ceremonial position and having the county manager do everything. You could make an argument for either one, but I think Cobb had been well served, and we cobbled out the compromise that really did both. If you recall, that's when we created a bill that raised the chairman's salary. It was still part time, though it created part time by percentage that you only worked so many hours, so that a [commission chair] like [Samuel S.] Sam Olens could at least keep his name on [a law practice] or Bill [Byrne] could have his landscaping company with his name on it. I think we had 15 percent, but that was my compromise. It was finally worked together and [became] the structure of county government right now. It was a compromise of a number of us.

Another bill that I passed was very small, but it was very, very meaningful to me. As you well know, as the World War II vets, and even the Korean War veterans, are dying off at tens of thousands now a day, people would want to have military funerals. I don't blame him. My dad was one of them. He was a high enough rank that he was going to get it,

but a lot of them weren't and deserved it. At the time and place, the National Guard could not get credit for time doing it. There were absolutely not enough honorary at Dobbins, which is where most would have to come from. Of course, we had the Atlanta Naval Air Station and the Marine Corps, whatever. But National Guardsmen were not allowed to do that as part of their service. So I put in a bill because a very dear friend of mine [died], and I got the Guard to agree to come over at no cost. He was an anti-aircraft guy in New Guinea for gosh sakes, and absolutely deserved it. They were told, "No." "What do you mean that the guy can't get a military honor guard, just an honor guard? That is something that has got to change." So I call up the Guard folks and said, "Would y'all mind?" They said, "We'd be honored, if you would just make it so that we could apply that to Guard service."

TS: Should be.

CC: So that is the law now. So the vast majority of what you see at these honor guard ceremonies are probably guardsmen all over Georgia. So that was a small change in the law. The Metropolitan River Protection Act is another one I get no credit for. I mean, a Republican passed the most significant piece of our urban conservation eco-friendly legislation, maybe not of all time, but right up there close. That is why the Sierra Club members were some of my biggest allies. I don't always agree with them, but I respect them very much.

TS: What did the Metropolitan River Protection Act do?

CC: It expanded the number of miles of setbacks, so that you couldn't have any development into them to help preserve the wetlands and waterways and keep the water clean. That was a fun one to do. What else? I'll tell you one that was interesting. Now, the states all over the country have adopted it. I get roundly booed [for it] in part. But I knew as a prosecutor, and any commonsense person will tell you, that spousal abuse in most cases, male to female, is learned. You see it by seeing your dad beat up your mom, and it becomes a pattern, intergenerational, on and on and on. So I had put in a bill to say you could have enhanced penalty; in fact, I created a new crime. I wanted it to be a felony; later it was converted to that to say that if you have beaten up your spouse in front of your children, you can be charged with a crime.

TS: Child abuse?

CC: Yes, that's exactly the code section I put it in. I couldn't get that out. I finally the next year reduced it to a misdemeanor and got it passed. When Mark [Fletcher] Taylor [Democrat from Albany and lieutenant governor of Georgia, 1999-2007] ran for lieutenant governor, he had that as one of his cornerstone theses to make that a felony. But a number of states had called me and said, "How did you get that done?" Or, "Why did you do it?" Well, I mean, it was commonsense. Those are little things that I passed, but the one that I got most visibility on that never became law—I have to tell one funny story on it—was my airport bill.

If you recall, there were some criminal issues, the indictments and a variety of things [of administrators of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport]. Never even thinking about it, I put in a bill that would create a state agency or a state authority. I didn't want to preclude Atlanta or anybody else, but thought there needed to be some higher level of input into the operation. I still think that. That just took off. I did not realize what pent-up frustration there was amongst the public in general, fairly or unfairly. It would get coverage every year and we passed it out of the Senate. Of course [Democratic House Speaker Tom] Murphy would kill it every time. But one time I'm sitting in my Senate office, and my phone rings. I think his receptionist says, "His honor, [Atlanta mayor] Maynard Jackson is on the line." I think, "What does Maynard Jackson want with me?" I pick it up and say, "Your honor." "Yes sir, Chuck, Maynard here." We knew each other, and, in fact, his nephew was a friend of mine at Chapel Hill years ago.

He said, "I'm going to ask you a favor. You could really, really help out. And I would deeply, deeply appreciate it." Well, I'm feeling good all of a sudden. He said, "We've got a problem here in the city. We are getting a piece of legislation passed, and it has gotten hung up in there. You've got a bill here that would fit what we need. Would you mind if we take your bill and put our city bill on that?" That was my airport bill, which they adamantly opposed. He had just killed it, but he was gracious enough to call and ask, "Can we use that instead of your bill?" "Of course, you can, Mayor. Absolutely!" So somewhere out there you have the Chuck Clay airport bill for Atlanta, and to this day I have no idea what it was. So those are the funny things.

On a more serious note, regarding the [current (2003) Georgia] flag, nobody will know that [M.] Kasim Reed [state representative, 1999-2003, state senator, 2003-09, mayor of Atlanta, 2010-18] really patched together [the flag bill]. The House had the votes and said that, "We will pass a bill, but we're not going to take any more of this B.S. from the Senate, telling us to pass it first, and then you won't. You prove that you can pass a bill." We could not cobble together the numbers to get there. Well, Charlie Tanksley, of course, bled for this thing for a lot of times. I don't want to seem more self-important, but Kasim and I came up with a compromise that was a little bit truncated, but it would not have the Confederate flag. There would be a vote. The Confederate flag would not be on it, but something to the effect that none of them would get a majority. There were like two other versions we put on. Both of them were voted no. Once we voted yay or nay, we could come back and reconsider whether a new design would fly. It didn't really matter. We got out by one vote.

TS: So you're talking about after Roy Barnes had changed the flag [2001], and Sonny Perdue came in and wanted to change it again?

CC: Yes, to the one we have now. And Bobby Franklin [state representative from Cobb County, 1997-2011], obviously, put a design together that he gets no credit for.

TS: Oh, really, Bobby Franklin?

CC: The flag we have now is the Bobby Franklin flag

TS: You're kidding.

CC: No. George Hooks [state representative, 1981-91, state senator, 1991-2013] took it because they weren't going to pass it. But no, the Bobby Franklin flag had the circle of stars around [the state seal], and we added, "In God We Trust." I've got the Bobby Franklin pin flag. I saw it today when I was looking for a Georgia pin. But George Hooks handled that. Then Kasim put it together in a substitute, and we got that out by one vote. Sure enough, when it went over to the House, they sent it back in their bill. It was not our bill. They sent their bill back, which was a better bill. But when they sent their substitute back over, we again passed that bill by one vote. The time clock was going fast and furious, and I can't tell you how many [nuts] dressed up as Confederate soldiers wandered around down there. One of them was a lawyer. Someone told me he was a KKK guy. I don't know that's true. But he had this Confederate uniform, and it was a zoo. But I am so proud that we actually got that done, and it is a good-looking flag that really does represent our history. I'm very, very proud of that one, even though I didn't play a key role.

TS: Well, back to the question of spousal abuse and child abuse, you were a member of the Open Gate Child Abuse Center, and you had a lot of legislation of that type.

CC: Yes.

TS: I wasn't quite sure about one bill that you sponsored legislation to protect employers from lawsuits in areas of education, health care, and childcare. What was its purpose? Why were employers been sued?

CC: The problem was that there was absolutely no sharing of information from juvenile court to our school systems. None. It was illegal to share that with anybody. You could have had a kid that was involved in something pretty serious on a Saturday night, and he would be back in school on Monday. And nobody in that school would have a clue. It could have been at a knife fight, whatever. This is really what got Open Gate going. The director there touched me very much when she said in a big meeting, one of the Chamber things, that, "We would not have been here but for Chuck Clay because he passed a bill that mandated that the juvenile court share information." The second part of that was I didn't want anybody like Open Gate or any employer to feel that they could not share child abuse allegations or rumors. I didn't want them to be tattletales, but I did not want them to be sued either for passing on the kind of information that we want to encourage people to pass on.

TS: Okay, so these two are related, making the records available so the schools know that they might have a potentially dangerous student coming back into their schools, but also ...

CC: But also to help provide them the psychological help and all the help they need, including a place to go. Now the juvenile courts will call Open Gate and say, "We need this kid over there."

TS: So the people that report a problem will not be sued.

CC: Right. Also that year I did the latest omnibus juvenile reform bill, overall. Mary Margaret Oliver [Democrat, Georgia representative, 1987-93, Georgia senator, 1993-99, and Georgia representative, 2003-present] had worked a lot on it. This is an irony. I was in the minority back then. Mary Margaret is a great person, dear friend. She had ticked off the speaker [Tom Murphy] so bad. She had a juvenile bill. They weren't competing. We worked together. It only made sense to join together for a broader bill, and it was a daggone good bill for a variety of reasons. But Murphy was so mad at her, they made it the Clay bill. They took my bill rather than Mary Margaret's. That was unheard of. That may have been the most generous thing the speaker ever did for me, and he wasn't doing it for me. It just happened to be my name. But that was an omnibus juvenile reform bill. So I'm proud of that one.

TS: It seems like it was a passion of yours—bills that have to do with children. You got a distinguished service award from the Georgia Middle School Association in 1992-93.

CC: Trying to get counselors in schools, trying to get their pay at the regular level slot. These things were budgetary items over the years. I was extremely proud. [Cobb commission chair] Bill Byrne picked it up and really ran with it 95 yards. It's a passion and it hasn't directly impacted me, but we called it then the ARC, the Atlanta Association for Retarded Citizens. It was for developmental disabilities. I went out on U.S. 41 to what we called service centers for the severely disabled as a haven, Katie Beckett [Medicaid] waivers, if you will [regarding income eligibility for home-based child services]. I went out there, and I swear to God, I just burst into tears. I mean, it was worse than most pet facilities. The building was as an old Quonset hut type building. It is still there, brick, warehouse, and it was pathetic. It was so pathetic that that it tears my heart out even talking about it. But the, the people there, they didn't know they were in this horrible [facility]. You had dedicated servants desperately trying to provide dignity and love and compassion and a meal.

Some of them could be at the [Tommy] Nobis Center [for people with disabilities in Marietta]. Some of them were never going to do anything but have twenty-four-hour coverage. But it got the place out of the home. Well, that just shocked me. I said, "This can't be." So I went down there [to the legislature] next year, and I got it, something like \$25,000 or \$50,000, some amount in the budget. I met with Bill Byrne, and Bill doesn't get much credit. But Bill saw the same thing, and he said, "No," and the county picked that up. I forgot what they put in [the county budget], but whatever it was, I put in the starter money. The county bellied up and put a facility service center on Franklin Road, which is just top flight. Bill Byrne deserves a gold star in his pantheon because it never would have happened for the state alone to do so.

But, again, Cobb steps up and builds a better mouse trap on our nickel, and as a Cobb County citizen I'm proud to say that my tax dollars went to a place that is decent. And I can tell you that one of the other most moving things at my law office there on the Square was a family came up to me and my assistant, Judy LeClaire, now Judy Hand—a saint

right up there—who was able to work the system to get the Cobb couple a Katie Beckett waiver for their child. It, basically, gives them a space to go to in a service center that they would not otherwise have been permitted to do. I didn't do anything, but the level of joy those people had to know that their child during the day would have some safe place to go, and that they could go to Kroger without always have to take that child or have somebody in to take care of him. It was the most moving thing I've ever seen. I don't mean for it to sound self-congratulatory, but my passion in politics has always been [to help those] who truly through no fault of their own can't help themselves. You have to be deaf, dumb, and blind, I think, [not to help]. If government can't help them, then shame on us, shame, shame on us!

I'm a Republican guy, you know, and we are always talking dollars and cents and budgets and stuff. That may be true, but tell me how it helped that couple that just sat in my office. I always used that. How did that help them? If you can't make that connection, I wouldn't say this obviously, but I think, "Shut up!" My halo is not polished, but those are things that are self-gratifying, yes, but they also changed one life. If you changed one life, then that is service well done. I wish we heard that more, across the board. The DUI bill is not because I get anything from somebody getting drunk, but because some kid is alive right now—or, maybe, me.

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get off a little bit on my soapbox, but that's how my interest grew. Then education obviously overlaps in so many different areas. I think that we are well-served, the state and the county. There may be other things that occur to me after I leave you. . But you mentioned legislation, and I wanted to mention things that I immediately remember.

TS: I mentioned earlier the Georgia Middle School Association distinguished service award in 1992-93. That was relatively early in your legislative career. You also got an outstanding legislator award from the Georgia Council on Aging. How did that come about?

CC: We started focusing on elderly abuse, seniors' rights, both in nursing homes and rights of grandparents. I never necessarily agreed that grandparents can have legal standing as parents in terms of visitation and access, but it ought to be something that's looked at and discussed in times of domestic relations and hearings and those things. There needs to be a component, if not necessarily mandated, but it needs to be a piece that you look at. Then the other was elder abuse in the nursing homes and those types of things, involving opening up records, you know, greater sunshine, if you will, in recordkeeping.

TS: You sound like a bleeding heart liberal!

CC: Yes, I am on those. I think it's prioritizing, an inverse pyramid; the top of that pyramid ought to be top loaded to those who can't help themselves. Then at the very end, get down to the Chuck Clays of the world who generally have been blessed enough right now to take care of themselves.

- TS: It sounds like those are bipartisan issues.
- CC: Should be and generally are. People do care. I think sometimes we don't see the forest for the trees or the trees for the forest or whatever it might be. I want to be reminded too. I say that not for me to be the Diogenes with the lantern looking for an honest man or bleeding heart liberal [laughs]. I need a light cast on me on occasion, not as a showcase, but to remind me that we all need to pull together
- TS: You strike me as, I guess, a traditional Republican that was a fiscal conservative but socially more moderate or liberal.
- CC: Yes, I hate to even use those terms, as sometimes we become defined by one issue. But again, I can tell you from the 1980s when I got active, from Tom Charron on, we were a teeny, teeny [political party]. As I said, he was the only Republican DA [District Attorney] in Georgia. These [Republicans] were good people who cared about people very, very much, and it was reflected in their legislation and their concern, whether it was Johnny Isakson [or others]. Certainly, I could say it too about Roy [Barnes], who helped with the QBEs [Quality Basic Education] as a floor leader for Joe Frank [Harris, governor of Georgia, 1983-91]. But those are the issues that ultimately define you. Yes, you have to be fiscally conservative to make sure you are business-friendly. But the other things go to your soul and character of the state. And we still have some making up to do.
- TS: How long have you been on the KSU [Kennesaw State University] Foundation?
- CC: I was like most things in life back-doored into it. Years ago, I had served on the old Southern Poly [Southern Polytechnic State University] Foundation. With the merger [of KSU and SPSU in 2015], those who wanted to or chose to ... what is the old credit card thing: they will keep renewing if you don't take your name off.
- TS: I see. So you went from the Southern Poly Foundation to the Kennesaw Foundation?
- CC: Yes, whether they want me still on there or remove me, it won't hurt me. I've got four college educations [of my children] I'm paying for right now, with one more to go, so if they are looking for a big check from Chuck, no; just look at the registrars of two or three of our state universities. They are getting all my money. Actually, I still have three I'm paying for now and one still to go, but with a high school sophomore girl, I might as well be paying college tuition just to keep them in fashion.
- TS: Well, they ought to have HOPE [Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally] scholarships [funded since 1993 for eligible students by the Georgia Lottery].
- CC: Yes, one has had to go back and earn it, but he is, and I'm very proud of that. My two girls—just leave them alone, and they're going to get straight A's. One of my sons would probably never earn straight A's, but he's a wonderful, wonderful kid, and he is giving 100 percent. That's all you ask. He will succeed just fine. But I am probably the

state's Exhibit One for HOPE Scholarships. Seriously. My oldest daughter could have gone anywhere. She was looking at the Georgetowns and GWs [George Washington University]. She got in with the honors program [at the University of Georgia] at the peak. She went from the Walker School [Marietta, Georgia] to the University of Georgia and cut my payload, basically, to about a quarter.

TS: I bet. What do you think of the law in Tennessee [Tennessee Promise] that provides two years tuition-free at community colleges or technical schools?

CC: I think that's coming. It's probably a good investment. I think that one area that Georgia truly has excelled in has been our technical colleges. But we need more because businesses will hire. We have moved the HOPE [scholarships] now to cover some part of our technical school educations. Do we need to do more? It should be looked at. I don't off the top of my head say it has to be this way or that. But you've been around here. You know that when I got here Chattahoochee Technical College used to be Marietta/Cobb Area Vocational Technical School in a modified Quonset hut on South Cobb Drive with another building or two around it. To look at that campus now! And they hire those kids! Look at what used to be North Metro [Technical College], which is part of Chattahoochee Tech now [since a merger in 2009]. It is a college campus, and it should be. But we will do what no other state does, and we have proven it. We'll put a technical school on site to their specifics of training, like with Kia Motors [in West Point, Georgia, and its partnership with West Georgia Technical College].

TS: Well, great. I just wanted to ask in passing. You are a former director and organizer of Vinings Bank [Smyrna, Georgia]. They do some wonderful things.

CC: Yes, they do great stuff.

TS: How did that come about?

CC: Roger [C.] Tutterow [original chairman of the board when Vinings Bank opened in 2007] on the investment side and [J.] Dan Oliver [chief executive officer] on the banking side. Roger is one of my closest friends.

TS: Really? He is also a professor of economics at KSU.

CC: Oh, yes. He is a dear, dear friend in a variety of capacities over the years. So I think he threw me a bone as a favor to try to make Chuck a little bit of money, honestly. But he got me as one of the organizers of the bank. That's how I got involved in that. I'm not a banker, but, man, if you were in Cobb County, there were two ways to get rich really quick for almost thirty years by either organizing a bank or owning some dirt [laughs]. If you had either one or fortunately both, I guarantee you, you know who the millionaires are, who suddenly were rich and geniuses by owning a community bank and some dirt. You were fat and rich and happy. But I enjoyed it. I learned enormously. At a certain point in time, several of us cashed out because, like [my service in] the legislature, I didn't mean to be a permanent legislator or permanent banker. So we made good money

and had a wonderful experience. If I had all the money in the world and just wanted to bank it for my kids, [Vinings Bank] is as good a place as you could possibly have it.

TS: I've been invited on occasion to a program that they put on out there. Great programs!

CC: Good stuff. Good stuff.

TS: Okay, great. Well, what I wanted to spend the rest of the interview on was to talk about Brock & Clay. It was founded in 1986, but before that [D.] Glenn Brock was a partner with Bob Barr. Is that correct? And then I guess he went to Congress.

CC: He went to the U.S. Attorney's office. He was the United States Attorney for the Northern District [of Georgia, 1986-90]. That was the same year I got elected [Cobb County] commissioner. When I was working in Vinings with Alex McLennan for a couple of years, Bob and I talked briefly. I did not know him well. I knew him [from meeting] at social things over at the small firm there. I certainly liked him. He had a fine reputation. He was somebody who you would look at and say, "That is a hard-working, fine, principled guy." Tough! It became Brock & Clay. We would have kept Bob's name on it, but you can't because if you are the United States Attorney, you have to take your name off any other entities. It would have been Brock Barr & Clay, but with his name off it became Brock & Clay.

TS: He was still a partner, but his name was just not on it.

CC: No, no, but you could have kept his name for whatever value. He may or may not have, but technically he had to take it off.

TS: So Glenn Brock comes to you and says, "Do you want to be a partner?"

CC: Yes, I had just won the county commission [seat]. I had been meaning to come back. My heart was back up on the Square. We discussed about it. Glenn had been the counsel for the Cobb Republican Party. I should have mentioned him earlier. He was one of the earlier party people who identified themselves [as Republicans], at the risk of not getting the inside track for anything. So [our philosophy was], "I'm going to be a Republican, and, by God, we will earn it." Bob Barr was the chairman of the Cobb Republican Party during those years, along with many others going back to forever and a day. We all knew each other from that perspective. I was the first Republican elected out in West Cobb County in that world of 1986, so it was the first breakthrough—and some of this is self-serving, in that locked box of business and contacts and the gravy train, if you will. All legitimate, all above board, all work that has to be done, but we were going to get some. All of a sudden, of course, Earl [Smith] had been elected [Cobb commission chairman in 1984], and suddenly we had a majority [on the county commission]—and Emmett [Burton] was technically.

That is when we changed the [county] attorneys. That's when we changed all these things. But Glenn and I sat down and said, "Yes, this seems like a great fit." And it was.

Now at that point in time, I was doing pretty much a grab-as-can type of practice. I have tried everything under the sun from divorce cases to criminal cases to FBI cases to searching a title or two. I did a bankruptcy or two. Glenn was doing insurance defense for [J. C.] Penney's [Company] back at that time. There is more detail if you want to know it, but Penney's had a very large insurance business out of Columbus, Ohio. The reason I say that is because we started doing that work. One of my best friends in Alexandria, Virginia, going back to grade school together, was the corporate counsel with Penney's in Columbus, Ohio. I heard somewhere that the counsel was David Roark. I mean, there can't be that many David Roarks. I asked, "Was he formerly from Virginia?" "Yes." So that is not why Glenn had that work, but it was a fun [connection]. So we started doing that, and we were growing.

Then Glenn got notified out of the blue after two to four years, somewhere in that timeframe, that Penney's was getting out of the insurance business. So all of a sudden two-thirds of the business was suddenly going out the door. It didn't impact me directly, but it certainly impacted the firm. And then we sat down and said, "By golly, we're going to be the corporate business go to/political firm in this county. Do you remember Leon Hames of Life of Georgia? He had been elected to the board of the Cobb General Hospital Authority. This was when they had just reorganized. A lot of people thought it was going down, but Bob [M.] Prillaman, Leon Hames, and a number of others you would know [saved it]. Leon and [Johnny] Isakson were, again, East Cobb bricks-and-mortar Republicans. He said, "Garvis [L.] Sams [Sr.] retired. I'm going to get you this job [as counsel for Cobb General]." And by golly, he did. All of a sudden, Brock & Clay was representing one of the largest entities [in Cobb County]. This was before they combined [with other local hospitals in 1993 into the WellStar Health System]. It was just Cobb General standing alone. We were the lawyers for Cobb General.

Now a year after that, after Carl Harrison had died [in 1988], and I had gone to the Senate, I had this enormous connection with the [Cobb County] Board of Education. Well, Laura Dingler was on the school board. She was Carl Harrison's right hand woman and was a big, big party person. She and Glenn were [close] from their party days when he was counsel and she was Carl's person in the party. So all of a sudden, [Richard] Dick Still [school board attorney], a great guy, had gotten into a political mess over the bonding issues back then. He wasn't doing anything wrong or illegal, but all of a sudden bond fees got to be a huge thing. Back then, bond fees, [the attorney] got, basically, 1 percent. [Former school board attorney] Harold [Willingham] would get 1 percent in and 1 percent out. He would pass the bond issue and then represent the bonds for sale out there.

TS: He made a lot of money that way, didn't he?

CC: He made a ton of money. Roy Barnes made a ton of money working with him. He learned from a master. Dick Still was doing the same thing, and all of a sudden, it blew up when they were doing these huge bond issues for Cobb schools. Suddenly, [the public asked], "How in the world can a local counsel be making a seven plus fee?" Well, that's what was charged back then. So he got tired of it. He was a former U.S. attorney. Dick

was a fine, fine man, but he said, “I ain’t going to take this.” He didn’t need it. So [the school board attorney position] opened up, and then, boom, we were off to the races because we got appointed the school board attorney [in 1989]. So we suddenly had Cobb General and then Cobb school board, and it was full tilt boogie there for a while. We did work for the EMC [Cobb Electric Membership Corporation]. We did all the work for the combined hospitals when they got together. Then they hired our attorneys all in house, but we were the corporate counsel. So for a while there we had Promina [Health System] and then the EMC and the school board, and then a lot of related work with it.

I won’t go into all the details, but you know, Brock & Clay had people like [Charles M.] “Chuck” Dalziel [Jr.], nationwide attorneys for these covenants lawsuits. He came in. We also had Richard [W.] Calhoun who was holdover from Sams Glover & Gentry [law firm]. He still is one of the two or three largest zoning [attorneys]. He used to be the attorney for zoning for the county. I could go down the list [of attorneys at Brock & Clay]. Of course, we had [H.] Scott Gregory [Jr.], Otis [Brumby Jr.’s] son-in-law. He has an Emory background [J.D., Emory University School of Law], does a lot of corporate business work, just as solid as you could be.

And then of course, he was very close friends with Clem Doyle who is married to Chief Justice [P. Harris] Hines’ daughter. [He has an A.B. from] Princeton [University; J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law]. I always say that, and it drives him crazy—he went to Princeton to play football, and he is in the Clarke Central High School, Athens [Georgia] Athletic Hall of Fame [inducted in 2013]. He was a wide receiver at Princeton, and that doesn’t happen all the time—great guy, Clem Doyle. Those are just easily named people because they are so embedded in the community. I’m saddened to a degree. We didn’t draw apart for lack of respect or anything. Glenn was doing just all education. I know he felt like—and he was right—I’ve got these school systems. But that whole mess with Cobb County and sunshine [laws] and laptops. It just beat him down to a point where Glenn couldn’t be [school board attorney] anymore. So he, basically, agreed to step down [in 2010]. Clem became the attorney instead. It just had to be a break for a lot of obvious reasons.

TS: But Clem is from the same law firm.

CC: Same law firm. But Glenn was doing Fulton County and DeKalb County. Then Nelson Mullins [Riley & Scarborough] is one of the nationally/internationally recognized law firms. In fact, [Harold Watson] “Trey” Gowdy [III] just retired from the [U.S.] House [of Representatives, 4th Congressional District, South Carolina, 2011-2019], and he is going to be a partner in Nelson Mullins. It is a [Columbia,] South Carolina based firm. [Richard W.] Riley was a former [U.S.] Secretary of Education [1993-2001] for [Bill Clinton], and he was governor of South Carolina [1979-87]. So they have a huge D.C. [District of Columbia] well recognized and well respected presence, and Glenn took his entire shop and boom, went over to Nelson Mullins [in 2013].

What I had was growing government affairs. For a Marietta law firm having a statewide lobbying practice, I just felt alone. Rightfully so, the [firm’s] vision was going here

[locally]. Glenn and I had been connected at the hip because of state government affairs issues and school issues. When he went out, I felt like, I want to be able to grow this vision. It breaks my heart in one respect because I've invested so much time emotionally and historically and age wise, but I was offered an opportunity to go. I'm down at Hall Booth Smith, [P.C.], which I enjoy because it is a big firm by our standards, but it is not an international firm. It's fundamentally a Georgia firm. It has six or seven Georgia offices and two or three or four surrounding state offices. It is now getting opened in New York and New Jersey. So it's a very aggressive firm, but it does feel like family.

There is a government affairs team that is well plugged in. For law firms, Hall Booth Smith was the second largest fundraiser [in 2018] for [Governor Brian] Kemp. I'm very proud of that. Could I have done that here? No. Could I do that on my own? No. It's not that they throw out money, money, but when they get involved, it's personal. We are a bipartisan firm. Members of the firm had fundraisers for Stacey [Abrams, the 2018 Democratic candidate for governor] and this, that, and the other. I won't go into what the advice is, but the firm decided to get into it. When they get into it, they could call on people throughout the State of Georgia that, "This is one we really want to belly up on." They are very, very proud of it. When they are very noticeable to [people around the state] that, of course, helps me. Nobody is going to say yes to me because of a fundraiser. I don't want to disabuse anybody of the reality of it. But it will certainly allow you to have discussions and feel like you could be at the table legitimately when we didn't have to. We could have waited until after the election. But what my point is—you can have those kinds of discussions with a platform large enough. When you decide to get in, you get in with both feet, and you flat get the job done. Not that we wouldn't get it done here [at the Marietta firm]. It would just have to be at a smaller scale.

That's what I'm trying to do on a statewide level, whether it is smart or not. My heart is always going to be in Marietta. My exoskeleton will be in Cobb. I'm proud to be down there. I'm proud to have that. But I still call Cobb County and Marietta, Georgia, home. I've confirmed with the mayor and said, "I will hold you to it." He has promised me that if I die before him, they can dump whatever is left of my ashes up there in the Clay family plot [in the Marietta City Cemetery]. You don't even have to tell me. Just get a little garden hoe and dig a little place to put my ashes covered up, and I'll be a happy camper. But I want my ashes to be right next to the Brumbys for eternity.

TS: Well, there's a nice monument for the Clays in the cemetery.

CC: It is. But I did ask him that just for the historical reasons. I don't want to dig the place up. So cremate me, get a vase, put a stone or a marker there just because there are so many generations of Clays. But that's where I plan to spend my eternity.

TS: Okay [laughs]. Wow! Well, you have to do a lot more traveling to get to work now.

CC: Yes, the good part about work today in my line of work is the last place, in most cases, you really need to be is in your office. You do need to be there, of course—I'm being facetious—to get paperwork and things, but with that phone and my laptop, I can do 90

percent of what I need to do [away from the office], as you probably can. Unless you are doing classroom teaching, do you really need to be sitting in a cubicle?

TS: Well, it's amazing how many people are teaching online.

CC: When they run me out of there, as I told somebody the other day, I had two jobs for thirty-plus years. Now I can't hold one down [laughs]. So if they run me out of this one, I would never open another bricks and mortar again. I wouldn't do it.

TS: Yes, it is amazing. It used to be that we would have so many office hours a week so that we were available to students, but you don't need office hours anymore because you're available all the time. All the students have to do is send you an email or text message.

CC: And certainly you want to show the flag and be there. For us in a big office, I'll be honest; my biggest reason for being there is just to be seen. Showing up is still part of the success. So I want to make sure I don't get too scarce, but you also interact with all the people. You interact with senior folks; you grab as grab can. It is true in a school too. A university certainly would be similar that way.

TS: It's a different world.

CC: It is a different world, but that's how I wound up where I am now and gladly so. As I told you last time, on Thursday, I'll be driving up to Fayetteville, [North Carolina] where they are dedicating Clay Hall [at Fort Bragg on Friday, January 11, 2019].⁷ So in some ways the circle does remain unbroken.

TS: Well, I'm about out of questions. This has been fabulous, and I really appreciate it.

CC: Well, thank you.

⁷ Named for General Lucius D. Clay Sr., the \$64.7 million building houses the Special Warfare Education Group, special operations language and cultural classrooms, and the Marquat Memorial Library. Clay Hall is expected to train annually some 1,500 Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers and enlisted men. It contains 190 foreign language classrooms, training students in fourteen languages. The fourth floor is dedicated to Civil Affairs training. For his role in the occupation and reconstruction of post-World War II Germany, General Clay is recognized as the forefather of today's Civil Affairs branch, according to Col. William J. Rice, the commander of the Special Warfare Education Group. "Fort Bragg Dedicates Cultural School," *Fayetteville Observer*, January 11, 2019.

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