

Oral History Interview
with
DURWARD W. GILMORE

Attorney; member, Missouri state Senate, 1949-51; President, Young Democrats of America, 1949-51; Judge, 28th Judicial Circuit of Missouri (state court system), 1951-55; General Counsel, Kansas City Life Insurance Company, 1955-77.

Kansas City, Missouri
January 20, 1989
by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
March, 1991
Harry S. Truman Library

Oral History Interview
with
DURWARD W. GILMORE

January 20, 1989

Summary Description: Topics discussed include politics in Mississippi County, Missouri; Truman's Senatorial campaign of 1934; Young Democrats of America; civil rights and the Missouri state legislature in 1949; National Urban League; desegregation in the U.S. Navy in 1945; Democratic Party politics in Missouri in 1952; nomination of Stuart Symington as Democratic Senatorial candidate in 1952; President Truman's national health insurance proposal; President Truman and civil rights; dismissal of General MacArthur; relationship of President Truman with Governor Forrest Smith; Inaugural of 1949; Stuart Symington and the Democratic national convention of 1960; and President Truman's offer of the 1952 Democratic nomination to Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Names mentioned include Ernest G. Gilmore, Roy Harper, Neal Helm, J.V. Conran, Elmo Hunter, Ray Lucas, Matthew Connelly, William Boyle, Kay Glass, Vern Taylor, Roy Baker, Harry S. Truman, Ted Hankins, Frank Knox, Lester Granger, Harry Hopkins, Charles Markham, Clare Jones, Clarence Hicks, Forrest Smith, J.E. Taylor, Bennett Clark, James P. Kem, Stuart Symington, Jim Pendergast, Tony Sestrik, Richard Nacy, India Edwards, Thomas Hennings, Forrest Donnell, Lloyd Stark, Hinkle Statler, Ira Haymaker, John R. Hahn, Jim Meredith, Sid Solomon, J. Grant Fyre, Lyman Field, Clark Clifford, Harold Stuart, John F. Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, Tom Pendergst, Herman Johnson, John Wells, Everett O'Neal, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Donor:

Durward W. Gilmore

Access:

Both the transcript and the tape recording are open without any restrictions.

Copyright:

Donated to the Government of the United States

A Presidential Library Administered by the National Archives and Records Administration

Oral History Interview
with
DURWARD W. GILMORE

Kansas City, Missouri
January 20, 1989
by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

[1]

JOHNSON: I'm going to start out, Mr. Gilmore, by asking you for some background. Would you give us the date and place of your birth, and the names of your parents?

GILMORE: I was born December 25, 1911, in the area of East Prairie, Missouri. My father's name was Ernest G. Gilmore, and my mother's name was Maude B. Gilmore.

JOHNSON: What was the name of the place where you were born?

GILMORE: East Prairie.

JOHNSON: And that's located where?

GILMORE: It's in Mississippi County, Missouri. Mississippi County is down in what we call the bootheel of Missouri, southeast Missouri, and that's where I hail from.

[2]

JOHNSON: Is that bottom land there?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Mississippi bottom land.

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Cotton country.

GILMORE: Yes, it used to be almost all cotton.

JOHNSON: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

GILMORE: I have a brother named George W. Gilmore; he's a lawyer in Sikeston, Missouri. That's near where we were born. I had another brother that died when he was aged 37, and his name was Ferd M. Gilmore. He also lived down at Charleston, Missouri but he was in Washington, D. C. going to law school when he died; he just died abruptly with a heart attack, without any previous experience with heart trouble. I had two sisters. [One is] Juanita Gilmore Long; her husband Roy Long is now deceased, and she lives in Sikeston, Missouri. I have another sister, Ernestine Gilmore Wright; she was always from Charleston, Missouri. Her husband was in the Army for thirty years; he got his law degree about the time he got out, and they lived at Charleston, Missouri.

[3]

Then they moved to Jefferson City, where he was supervisor of liquor control under Warren Hearn, when Warren was Governor. They now live in Cape Coral, Florida.

JOHNSON: How about your education? Where did you go to school?

GILMORE: I went to school at the local grade school and high school in East Prairie; then went to Missouri U [University]. Well, I went to the Naval Academy first.

JOHNSON: After high school?

GILMORE: Yes. I went to the Naval Academy, and I was there just a little over a year, and then I got out because I was deficient in calculus. Then I came back and went to Missouri U, and finished my pre-law work, and did my first two years of law school there. But then I wanted to go out west to summer school. I started out to Boulder, Colorado, and I stopped at Topeka just to see what that law school was like at Washburn, and I liked it so well, I stayed there for summer school. I liked that so well I stayed there and finished my last year. So, my degree is from Washburn, in Topeka. I think that's the extent of my education, the L.L.B.

JOHNSON: What year was it you got your law degree?

[4]

GILMORE: In 1938.

JOHNSON: You went through the Depression and were still able to afford a law education. What was your father's job, or occupation?

GILMORE: He was a farmer, and a contractor.

JOHNSON: What kind of farming did he do?

GILMORE: Just general farming, cotton, corn, wheat.

JOHNSON: How many acres did he have?

GILMORE: Well, he farmed probably, oh, 1,500 acres or so. He didn't actually do the work himself. He was busy with his contracting, building of homes and whatnot, business buildings. And he was County Collector. He was first on the County Court in Mississippi County, at the time that Harry Truman was on the County Court here in Jackson County.

JOHNSON: So they were acquainted?

GILMORE: They were acquainted; they weren't any great buddies or anything, but they went to conventions. They had meetings of the County Court organizations, and that's where my dad got acquainted with him.

[5]

JOHNSON: So that was a three member county court, like here? Was he presiding judge?

GILMORE: My dad was, and Mr. Truman was here.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what years he was presiding judge down there?

GILMORE: Well, I imagine from about 1930 to 1936, I guess. Then he became county collector.

JOHNSON: Did he get involved at all in the 1934 senatorial campaign for Harry Truman?

GILMORE: Yes, he got involved. I was at the right age where I was responding to what he wanted me to do, and I put up signs all over trees and posts, and what not.

JOHNSON: In both campaigns; both the '34 and '40?

GILMORE: In '40 I was just out of law school.

JOHNSON: Were you friends of Roy Harper?

GILMORE: You bet, sure.

JOHNSON: We have an interview with him.

GILMORE: Well, you'll find him to be a very gracious fellow. He was real active in our Democrat party affairs. He was probably six years older than me. He was in a law

[6]

firm at Caruthersville; Ward and Reeves law firm. But Roy was at every Democrat meeting we had in that part of the country. Now, I don't know what motivated him to do it, but he was real active in Truman's first campaign for the Senate in 1934. I presume it was because we had a

fellow named Neal Helm, who was real active, and Neal had some money, by the way, that he could use, you know, and Roy didn't have any money. He was like most of us, when you get out of law school, but Neal Helm...

JOHNSON: You were acquainted with Neal Helm too then?

GILMORE: Yes. He's dead now.

JOHNSON: What was the source of his wealth, do you know?

GILMORE: Well, I'm not real sure; he was in business in Caruthersville. All I knew, he was at every Democrat meeting we ever had.

JOHNSON: Well, now, Truman liked to campaign in Caruthersville. Did you ever attend any of those rallies there?

GILMORE: Not in Caruthersville. Well, naturally he would because everybody down there was for him.

JOHNSON: But in '34 you put out signs and did help promote Truman's candidacy?

[7]

GILMORE: You bet.

JOHNSON: Do you remember Truman giving any campaign speeches there in Mississippi County? This is Mississippi County we're talking about isn't it?

GILMORE: Yes. I'll tell you what; our organization down there was such at the time, that, for example, when Harry Truman went into New Madrid to start the campaign, someone down there told him, "If you want to save your time, go talk to J.V. Conran." J.V., we called him "the boss of the bootheel." If J.V.'s for you, we're all for you." Well, that was true of my county too. We had the same people that were like J.V., and my dad was in that group.

JOHNSON: Did you know J.V. Conran very well?

GILMORE: Yes sir.

JOHNSON: What kind of a campaigner, or what kind of a Democrat was he?

GILMORE: He didn't know there was any party but the Democrat party. He was prosecuting attorney of New Madrid County for years and years and years, I guess until he died. I used to say, if you wanted to do any business in New Madrid County, you had better be getting along with

[8]

J.V., because he sent innocent men to the penitentiary and he let criminals go free, depending on where you stood with him.. That was true. Now over in Pemiscot County, [there was] that kind of organization; and in Dunklin County, the same way; Stoddard County and Mississippi County, we were all like that. If the party group was for you -- there wasn't any place down there hardly for Republicans then -- if the party was for you, you don't need to do any campaigning, it's going to be done for you. We didn't have any people, to speak of, that were Republicans down there.

JOHNSON: So you had a county committee, a Democrat County Committee?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did the Republicans have any County Committee at this time?

GILMORE: Oh, if they did, I didn't know about it.

JOHNSON: Was 1934 your first or earliest involvement in politics?

GILMORE: Well, no, I'd been involved before, when my dad was running for office, or whomever the organization was for. But you see, Truman didn't run in this county

[9]
until '34 I guess.

JOHNSON: What did your dad think of Harry Truman? Did he ever talk about Harry Truman to you?

GILMORE: Oh, he talked about when Truman became a name, you know, a candidate for the Senate, '34. He talked about him being an honest guy. A lot of people said, "He's for the Pendergast mess up there in Kansas City." But my dad said, "Listen, he's an honest fellow that knows what he's doing, and does what's right." He said, "You know, I've had meetings with him and the County Court commissioners -- they called them judges, but they were really commissioners -- when we have our meetings, Harry Truman is always for what's honest and honorable."

JOHNSON: By that time his road building program had earned him a good reputation I suppose.

GILMORE: Well, sure, you bet. Later, I found out after I moved up here that he had done a good job at that too.

JOHNSON: So in the late thirties you were getting your law education. What did you do right after graduation from law school?

GILMORE: Well, I couldn't get a job working for any law firm, because I was from the country. They wanted to

[10]

hire boys from the city. Well, like our Judge Elmo Hunter here now, a Federal Judge; Elmo got hired for \$30 a month because he was number one in my law class. When you got out of law school then, nobody wanted to hire you unless you were one of the top boys.

JOHNSON: In other words, jobs were scarce for just about anybody and everybody?

GILMORE: That's true. You weren't alone in not having any money to spend.

JOHNSON: The New Deal was popular with your father and with the other Democrats I suppose, and Roosevelt was a popular figure?

GILMORE: My goodness yes, sure.

JOHNSON: Were you supportive of the New Deal consistently?

GILMORE: Sure. You bet.

JOHNSON: What kind of position did you get? What was your first job after graduation?

GILMORE: Well, I had to take the bar exam, and between the time you take the bar exam and the time you get word whether you passed or not, is usually a couple of months. So, since I was a good Democrat, the Democrat

[11]

group there saw to it I had a job working for the Highway Department as an accident investigator.

JOHNSON: This was in East Prairie?

GILMORE: No, at the Highway Department's headquarters down there which was at Sikeston.

JOHNSON: And after you got word that...

GILMORE: When I passed the bar? Well, of course, my job was supposed to be over with the Highway Department; it was just to tide me over. So, I went to work learning how to practice law.

JOHNSON: In a law firm down there?

GILMORE: No, I went to work...

JOHNSON: You started on your own?

GILMORE: I went to work on my own.

JOHNSON: In Sikeston?

GILMORE: No, in East Prairie and Charleston.

JOHNSON: So, you had your own law practice then for a while.

GILMORE: Well, that was just for a short period. We had a fellow in Scott County who got appointed to be

[12]

superintendent of insurance. He was a lawyer and had a pretty good law practice for a country law office; he just moved me in there and I took over while he was gone.

JOHNSON: What was his name?

GILMORE: His name was Ray Lucas, and he said, "You know, on weekends I'll come home and I'll teach you how to practice law." Well, the weekends never would let him do that; he was too busy. So I claim I never did learn how to practice law because my mentor wasn't available.

JOHNSON: So how long did you do that then?

GILMORE: Well, then I became prosecuting attorney like you're supposed to when you're a young lawyer. Then I ran for the State Senate and got elected in 1949.

JOHNSON: Okay, after the war. What did you do during the war years?

GILMORE: When I got out of law school, I applied to the Navy for a commission in the Naval Reserve, and they gave me a commission. Then, in the fall of 1940 they ordered me to duty, which they did in February of 1941. So, I went on duty with the Navy and was in the Navy four and a half years. Then I came home, and then I ran for State

[13]

Senator.

JOHNSON: It was in February of '41 that you went on duty in the Navy?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And you're in the Navy until '45?

GILMORE: Yes. I went on duty in February of '41; that's before Pearl Harbor, and I was on duty until November, '45.

JOHNSON: Did you serve overseas at all?

GILMORE: No, I didn't. They assigned me to the personnel office at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes. Later, I went to the amphibious force, Atlantic, but then something happened there at Great Lakes. They ordered me back there to be personnel officer. I had been assistant personnel officer before. The last year of the war, I was ordered to duty, to the Chief of Naval Personnel Office at Washington. And I stayed there until the war was over.

JOHNSON: Of course, in '44 Truman ran for the vice-presidency and the convention was in Chicago. Did you go to the convention or have a chance to go to the convention in '44?

[14]

GILMORE: No, because I was on duty in the Navy. But after he got elected as Vice President, some of us that were from Southeast Missouri met with him. In my position I had gotten commissions for some of the fellows because the Navy told us that Great Lakes was going to go real big, and we don't have the manpower to man it. You find the right people for the jobs, and we'll put the right uniforms on them. I had some buddies from the bootheel up there with me. So we went down to see Truman one time when he was in Chicago, after he was Vice President.

JOHNSON: He was Vice President only for about 81 days.

GILMORE: Well, that was the time when we went down there.

JOHNSON: In February or March of '45, I suppose.

GILMORE: Yes, that's right.

JOHNSON: So you did get to visit him once then while he was Vice President.

GILMORE: Yes, I remember it very well.

JOHNSON: Do you remember that one?

GILMORE: Yes. Of course, the Secret Service were everywhere. And even though we had an appointment with

[15]

him, they were going to see to it that we didn't get in there. I had known Matt Connelly, so I said, "Tell Matt Connelly we're here." So, of course, Matt came out and got us, and he said he had told those "sonsofbitches" that we were going to be there.

JOHNSON: So you weren't at the White House when you visited him as Vice President, were you?

GILMORE: No, I was in Chicago, at the Morrison Hotel.

JOHNSON: How did you know Matt Connelly? How did you get acquainted with him?

GILMORE: Well, that's a long story. I got involved with the Young Democrats. And I was president of the Young Democrat Clubs of Missouri; then me and some others decided I would run for president of the Young Democrats of America. Well, my idea was that we had all these other states that had people that wanted to run, too, you know, and here I am from Missouri and the President's from Missouri. This was after the Vice Presidency, but Matt worked for him when he was Vice President.

JOHNSON: And when he was the head of the Truman Committee.

GILMORE: Yes, that's right, because Matt used to talk about

[16]

that. Well, anyhow, I decided that if I was going to get involved in running as president of the Young Democrats, that I ought to go out and talk to Truman. I should go out to Washington, because, you know, some of these other states had fellows that wanted to run, and they had people that were in a position to trigger Truman's help. So I thought if I'm going to run for president of the Young Democrats of America, and if the President is going to come out and be for somebody from some other state, then I don't want to get in there to begin with, because I'm going to get my ears whipped off.

So I went down to talk to Truman. I called up to get an appointment, and he had me talk to Matt Connelly. He knew who I was, of course, but he said, "Now, you talk with Matt." Then he and I discussed it; I talked with Matt, and then I went up to see Mr. Truman. He said, "Why do you want to see me about this?" I said, "Well, you're the President and Bill Boyle is the chairman of the Democrat National Committee, and I've already heard some of these other people that want to be candidates for president of the Young Democrats, opposing me. It just wouldn't be right to have the President, and the chairman of the Democrat National Committee, Bill Boyle, and the president of the Young

[17]

Democrats all from Missouri; that wouldn't do." So I said, "My people out there are going to raise some money to support me if I run, and I don't want to get myself into position where some day I get word from the White House to get out of this. If there is any chance that I'm ever going to get that word, I want to get out and never get into it." So, we talked maybe ten minutes and he said, "I'll tell you what you do, old bootlegger," because I was from bootleg country there, "you go back over to that hotel where you are and wait for a call from Matt."

Well, I went back over there for a couple of hours and Matt called me and said, "The Boss said, come on over here." I went back over there. He said, "Old bootlegger, you get right in there. I won't do a thing to help you out, but I'll promise you no one will ever pull a stopper on you." That's what I had asked him to do, see? "Let me know if there's any chance I'm going to be told someday to get out of this; tell me now and I won't get in it." So he gave me his word, and I'm sure that he was asked to get me out, but he didn't. He told me he wouldn't do a thing in the world to help me.

We had a convention down in Chattanooga, Tennessee. When I got down there and checked into this convention hotel, about a week before that convention, I found out

[18]

that up on the top floor of the hotel, traveling incognito, was Neal Helm, who worked for the Democrat National Committee, and Eddie Brown. He was one of the publicity people for the Democratic National Committee. When they found out I was there, they told me to come up to see them, but don't tell anybody that I knew them. They were going to be there all the time; they had been there two weeks when I got there. And he said, "Now, the President said we're not to get involved in this, but we will see to it that you don't get mistreated by anybody."

JOHNSON: That first visit with Truman in the White House, was that on July 22, 1949? We do have on the record that you had an appointment at that time, and apparently you were in there with Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson and Estes Kefauver as well as Miss Kay Glass, Vern Taylor, and Mrs. Van Hicks.

GILMORE: July 22, '49?

JOHNSON: Yes. Well, you were elected at the Chattanooga conference.

GILMORE: Well that was in November.

JOHNSON: You think that came a few months later. But this first visit with Truman, was that when LBJ was there

[19]

with you at that time?

GILMORE: I don't believe so. No.

JOHNSON: You don't remember the year or the month of that first visit?

GILMORE: Well, I think, after I got elected, the first time I ever met with him in the White House, that would have been about the middle of November '49.

JOHNSON: Yes, but you went to him before you were going to run, so it had to be before November, your first meeting, and I suppose maybe it was this July meeting. Maybe LBJ and Kefauver weren't there with you, if you don't recall that they were.

GILMORE: I don't recall. I had a very close relationship with Kefauver, and I had known Lyndon Johnson since he was a young member of Congress.

JOHNSON: When did you first become a member of the Young Democrats of America? When did you start becoming active?

GILMORE: As soon as I got home after the war in 1946.

JOHNSON: In '46. You went back to your law practice and then you joined the Young Democrats of America. Then

[20]

you became President of the Missouri Young Democrats?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you attend the 1947 National Convention in Cleveland?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: You weren't there for that one. That's when Roy Baker was elected.

GILMORE: Right. Yes.

JOHNSON: And he apparently was kind of a staff assistant, or was associated with Senator Lyndon B. Johnson; he was a Johnson person.

GILMORE: That's right. Now, at that time, we didn't have any idea he was one day going to be President.

JOHNSON: Had you known Baker, or did you just get acquainted with him after you became president?

GILMORE: I got acquainted with him before I became President by attending the National Convention, and the regional meetings.

JOHNSON: But you weren't there in Cleveland in '47.

GILMORE: No.

[21]

JOHNSON: So you had served like two years as president of the Missouri Young Democrats when the convention of '49 occurred?

GILMORE: No, I was already president of the Young Democrats of Missouri, and I was in the State Senate of Missouri; that's when we had a meeting in Kansas City of all the states that Roy Baker had a close relationship with to determine who was going to be his successor. What we wanted to do was eliminate a lot of work if we could. We wanted to get those states -- and there were about 16 of them that Roy had a good working relationship with -- and we wanted to get those people together at one place and see if we couldn't agree on who should succeed him. They had that meeting here in Kansas City; well, it seems to me like it was in the spring or summer of '49. At that meeting everybody there, from the various sixteen states, agreed that I would be the one.

JOHNSON: Is that when you decided to go to Truman and get his blessing?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: When were you first elected to the State Senate?

GILMORE: In 1948.

[22]

JOHNSON: In our collections, there is a telegram, from Elsa Williamson, June 1949, stating that Missouri House Bill 182 and the Missouri House Committee substitute for the bill were tied up in the Missouri Senate Education Committee. Apparently this was a bill that would have opened up higher education, helped desegregate higher education. She said the legislature was likely to adjourn on Thursday, and she asked Truman to recommend to chairman D.W. Gilmore of Missouri, Senate Education Committee -- you were apparently in charge of the Senate Education Committee at the time -- passage of bill 182 or its substitute.

I don't see any more evidence about this. Do you recall what happened to that bill?

GILMORE: Well, I recall what happened because at that time you couldn't run a bill like that through the Missouri Senate with a squad or platoon of Marines. So whoever it was who wanted me to help that get passed, I just said to them, "There is no way at all that it can get passed. It'll just die in committee."

JOHNSON: Is that what happened then?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What was the thrust of that bill? Would it simply

[23]

have integrated the colleges and universities?

GILMORE: They had a black fellow that was wanting to make application to attend the University of Missouri at Columbia and that was, of course, an effort of the National Urban League with headquarters in New York. They were doing this all over at that time, and the people in Missouri had not been "brainwashed" enough for that to happen. There wasn't any chance of doing it.

JOHNSON: Well, the Young Democrats, though, weren't they supporting Truman's civil rights program and desegregation of the Armed Forces, for instance? Is that what you recall?

GILMORE: Well, actually we didn't call it the civil rights program. I guess you are talking about '49 now; we did sure. But we had people in our Senate and in the House that were violently opposed to it.

JOHNSON: Well, apparently the majority were opposed.

GILMORE: Yes. And things like that, they were too hot a potato to handle; you just let them die in committee.

JOHNSON: But as president of the Young Democrats -- you were elected in 1949 for a two-year term -- one of its policies or programs apparently was to support Truman's civil

[24]

rights legislation which was bottled up in the Congress. That included a fair employment practices act, anti-lynching, and anti-poll tax.

GILMORE: We were for all those things, but they always had some other things thrown in with it. The people weren't ready yet, and they wouldn't ever have been ready if it hadn't been for people like Harry Truman. Well, even then, you couldn't expect him to go out and be what you call a Jesse Jackson. You know, he was a good President, but you can't be for everything that people want.

JOHNSON: Well, he set up these two Presidential committees, one on civil rights and the other one on desegregation of the Armed Forces, equality of treatment in the armed forces. On the basis of their reports, he proposed certain legislation, and of course, also issued that executive order for desegregating the Armed Forces. I think this was in '49, about the time you were president of the Young Democrats of America. What did you actually do during those two years that you were president of the Young Democrats of America?

GILMORE: Well, I went to all of the State conventions, and everybody wanted a job in the Government. Not everybody, but...

[25]

JOHNSON: Patronage was one of the big issues?

GILMORE: Yes; and to keep the organizations intact in the other states. We want to keep them where they could be effective, and to be effective you have to sort of be tuned in on what the people say they want.

JOHNSON: They were not organized in every state, I would guess.

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: Do you remember how many states the Young Democrats were organized in?

GILMORE: Almost all of them.

JOHNSON: Almost all of them?

GILMORE: Yes. A lot more than there were Republican.

JOHNSON: Where were they strongest? Was it on college campuses for instance, that you had your grassroots? Where did you have your grassroots?

GILMORE: For our Young Democrats?

JOHNSON: Yes.

GILMORE: If we didn't have a Young Democrat organization, we

[26]

kept in touch with the state president and his organization to see that one was created there. We wanted to create Young Democrat activities everywhere, but college campuses were one of the principal places, you know.

JOHNSON: You were in the State Senate until when?

GILMORE: Until 1951.

JOHNSON: Okay, so you're still a member of the State Senate while you were going around the country.

GILMORE: That's right. Now, you were talking about that telegram to me. I remember now. I was on the Education Committee; I don't know if I was chairman or not. Ted Hankins, a friend in the State Senate, he liked to drink a little whiskey, and he liked somebody else to furnish the whiskey. He was a Republican senator, a real nice guy. And I found out that if I would get him over to my office early in the morning and give him a drink -- I had in my filing cabinet a little bottle of something or other that he liked -- that after about two drinks I could find out if the Republicans had anything up their sleeves that day.

Well, one morning I found out from Ted Hankins that the Republicans were really going to throw a bombshell,

[27]

and that they were going to hurt me. Ted was a friend of mine, and he told me about this bill, that they were going to raise hell about, to try to make us get it out of committee. Of course, I went right straight to the Democrat leadership in the Senate. Let's see, it was the floor leader and the president pro tempore. Well, we didn't convene the Senate that morning; we took another 30 minutes, delayed it. Our party was in power, so that if the president pro tem didn't want to start the meeting on time, he just sent word out that it's not going to start until he was ready. We had a quick meeting of all the Democratic members of the Senate and we decided to get that bill out of committee today. See, what they were going to do was raise hell because here's old Gilmore, president of the Young Democratic Clubs of America, and Truman's wanting to get this bill out that he's got bottled up over there. So we got the bill out that morning. Of course, that was the end of that.

JOHNSON: You mean the bill to desegregate higher education?

GILMORE: Well, in effect, yes.

JOHNSON: You got the bill out of committee?

GILMORE: Yes, I remember we got it.

[28]

JOHNSON: Then did it go up for a vote on the floor?

GILMORE: Well, it has to go to the House.

JOHNSON: Has to go to the House.

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: But it died in the House?

GILMORE: Yes. They knew it would die over there. What they wanted to do was to embarrass me, you see.

JOHNSON: Well, then, in other words, it wasn't popular to be pro-civil rights exactly at that time.

GILMORE: In the State of Missouri that is exactly right. No matter how you wanted to, you better not if you want to get elected next time.

JOHNSON: Was there a black vote in your district that was important to you?

GILMORE: No, but there was a white vote that was. The black people didn't vote much then. But the white people of my district were agreed. If I had been out here loud-mouthing around about civil rights -- now, of course, no matter how you stood, you can't run water up hill. And so why go out here, when all you're going to do is to

[29]

get yourself bruised up, and you're not going to get anything done. That was our attitude at that time. As I say, if it hadn't been for Harry Truman, that would have been the attitude almost everywhere.

JOHNSON: So he did make a big difference, eventually.

GILMORE: Yes sir. But I already knew what his position was. While I was in the Navy, the Chief of Personnel appointed three officers to be in charge of the Navy's position on blacks. And I gravitated to that position. The Navy's personnel manual doesn't say anything anywhere about

the color of your skin, so the Navy's attitude was, "There's the Navy regulations." We were told we were to formulate and promote plans to go out from the Secretary of the Navy that would make them assimilate the Negro, the blacks, into the Navy.

Now, you see, there is background to that, too. The background of that was the Navy didn't take any draft people, and of course, I guess they saw to it that damn few got volunteered. But through Mrs. Roosevelt's efforts and Paul V. McNutt, who was Manpower Commissioner, they put enough heat on Roosevelt to order the Navy to get into this civil rights program and treat black people like people. They're not blacks, they're people in the Navy. Now, that was before I got into

[30]

this program, but when I first got into the program I was given a transcript of all of the communications between the President and Secretary of Navy that the Navy Department had. They said you better familiarize yourself with that before you start working on this.

JOHNSON: This is 1945 now you're talking about, the end of the war?

GILMORE: Yes, the last year of the war. We had 160,000 Negroes in the Navy; half of them were in the Stewards Branch, in other words...

JOHNSON: About 80,000 were in the Stewards Branch?

GILMORE: Yes, sweeping the corridors and serving meals. But you got these other 80,000 that's got some ability to do something. In the first group, some of them couldn't count their goddamn fingers. We had to take them through a draft. What we had to do at Great Lakes, then, was to set up a remedial school before we could teach them anything. About half of them we had to teach how to read and write, up to a third grade level. Then, the ones that had some capability, you put them in the Stewards Branch too. That's what the senior officers in the Navy wanted to do, and that's what we were doing.

So when I got down there in this program, we had

[31]

one fellow in the Chief of Naval Personnel's office that knew what the hell the problem was; the others did too, but they weren't going to do a thing about it. We formulated a letter that went out over the signature of the Secretary of the Navy. This formulated letter would go to all men -- all ships and stations. Hereafter, it said, all Negro personnel will be ordered to duty on the basis of their capabilities.

You know, Frank Knox was Secretary of the Navy, and Roosevelt was President. Frank Knox died about the time that Roosevelt did, and Truman became President. No matter, Roosevelt had been raising hell with the Navy, like the Army and everybody else, only to keep Mrs. Roosevelt satisfied.

JOHNSON: You mean on this idea of equality of treatment in the Armed Forces?

GILMORE: Yes. He believed it; he was the right kind of guy, but he also had a lot of other things on his mind. Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to see to it that he didn't have anything on his mind except to help the Negroes make social gains while they are in the Armed Services.

Well, when Truman got to be President, he didn't go ahead with this program to satisfy Mrs. Roosevelt. He went ahead with it because that's the way that he

[32]

personally felt. He was a kind of fellow that was just a regular guy until you got to where you started stepping on the wrong toes, and then he turned into really a crusader, almost.

Now, I get into the Navy Department up there and me and these other two fellows decided that what we were going to do to carry out the wishes of the President and the Secretary of the Navy, was, by God, to get out a letter which spelled it all out. Then, we would go tell all these Admirals, wherever their command, that this just isn't some window dressing, but this is for real and you're going to be personally responsible for any dragging of heels on carrying this out. We really mean this. Meanwhile, we've got a lot of black people in the Navy that have been automobile mechanics, everything you can think of; we've got some. When we sent them through classification at the training centers, you have a series of exams you give to everybody. Well, after you give them the exams, this is after we had to integrate.

Negroes in the Navy, after you give them the exams, you don't sign them over to machinists mate, like you would if he was white because, after all, he's still black. So, you put that sonofabitch over here where he belongs, and cleaning corridors and waiting on people; that's what a black man's for. Now, that's what the

[33]

Navy -- that was the attitude of the senior officers of the Navy.

Mr. Roosevelt had had a different attitude, and he expressed it in many letters, but no one really dug in and really did something about it. So, here's this guy Truman, and he's supposed to do something about it. It was apparent you couldn't ever get it done without, by God, making them do it. So we got this all out to every ship and station, and then we went, the three of us, went to various places throughout the continental United States where we had Negro personnel, to tell the commanding officers that, you know, this isn't a bunch of bull shit; this is what you've got to do. And the President is going to kick your ass out of the Navy too, if you don't. We sort of let them know that that was the way it was going to be.

We had Mr. Lester Granger, who was on leave as Executive Director of the National Urban League, as an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, a dollar-a-year man. He had been a classmate at Dartmouth with [James] Forrestal, who was now Secretary of the Navy. So, they divided up where we were going to go, to all these shore stations. We took Mr. Lester Granger with us. We had an airplane assigned to us, executive craft, and we went to every shore station that had an abundance of Negro

[34]

personnel, and we told them what the story was. It started getting done like it was supposed to. I'll tell you; we said, we just can't go out there and tell these people that, unless they are told ahead of time we're coming, and we don't want it to be from the Chief of Naval Personnel; we want it to be from the Secretary of the Navy. And in the letter, the Secretary of the Navy said that he was speaking for the President. So, it wasn't any hogwash to it. One of the fellows even looked at shore stations, oh, in the Philippines and Honolulu. Well, we had some other places where we had Negro personnel out in the Pacific. He went to those places. Granger didn't go with him on that trip; he went alone. That's how I really got to know Truman better than I'd ever known him before.

JOHNSON: So you're involved in Naval personnel policy and the implementing of a more liberal, open, equal type of policy.

GILMORE: Yes, that's right. We were integrating Negroes in the Navy. They were supposed to be treated like people. When they put on that Navy uniform, they're in exactly the same category as the whites. Roosevelt had an old fellow there that did some of the unpleasant chores for him around the White House.

[35]

JOHNSON: Oh, you mean, what's his name, from Iowa. Harry Hopkins?

GILMORE: Yes, right. He had a son that got killed.

JOHNSON: Oh. Harry Hopkins did?

GILMORE: Yes. On one of those invasions out there in the Pacific. So, in other words, when we go talk to them, these guys have just as much right to a recommendation in the Navy as Harry Hopkins' son. It's just got to be that way whether you like it or not -- whether you're from Georgia or Mississippi, that's it.

JOHNSON: Yes. So that was in process when you left the Navy.

GILMORE: Yes, it was in process, that's right.

JOHNSON: And then they got the orders from the President in this executive order [EO 9981, July 26, 1948] to carry this through.

GILMORE: No, that's when we went out; after that order had gone out, we went out personally to see all these people.

JOHNSON: But now the order didn't go out until 1948, and you're out of the Navy by that time.

[36]

GILMORE: Yes, that's right. I don't know about the order you're talking about.

JOHNSON: Are you talking about a Naval order?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Yes, I was referring to an executive order of the President, creating a committee to help bring about desegregation of the Armed Forces. While you were president of the Young Democrats, was civil rights one of the policies or programs you were promoting as you went around to the various states?

GILMORE: No, no.

JOHNSON: That was not a major issue with the Young Democrats?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: What did seem to be the most important issue? You mentioned patronage, but what else seemed to be the most important issues in their minds, in these Young Democrats minds?

GILMORE: Well, nationally they didn't have any particular issues, that I know of; it was to keep the Democrat party active and effective.

[37]

JOHNSON: But they also supported the Fair Deal programs, did they not? It seems they were for the higher minimum wage, extending social security, public housing, for these things, at least in some of their pronouncements at their conventions.

GILMORE: Well, we had resolutions committees, and I suppose we adopted everything the Democrat National Committee wanted us to, but we didn't particularly work at it.

JOHNSON: But your job was mainly organizational then, rather than policy?

GILMORE: Yes. Once I got to be president of the Young Democrats, why Mr. Truman had Matt Connelly call me and tell me to come over; he wanted to talk to me. And he said, "I want you to come over here once a month, when it's convenient, and make a verbal report to me of what you've been finding around the country." He said, "You know, these palace guards, they don't know all what's going on." And he said, "If there's something in the papers that they think I ought not see, they see to it that I don't get the papers." He said, "Hell, I have to stop at a newsstand and buy one when I'm out taking my walk." He said, "I want you to come tell me at least once a month, fifteen minutes." Well, I did what he

[38]

told me; I let Matt know.

JOHNSON: In other words, maybe you weren't even on the appointments calendar then.

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: Because, you see, we have only about three appointments here on the appointments calendar for you. One of them was in January 1950; this was when he met with newly elected officers of the Young Democrats on January 11. Along with you were Mrs. Kay Glass, Mrs. Lolita Blackiston, Michael Jaffrin, Roy Baker.

GILMORE: Roy Baker wasn't with us; we were trying to get a job...

JOHNSON: Charles Markham.

GILMORE: Charles Markham, yes.

JOHNSON: Clare Jones; she apparently was director of the Women's Division of the DNC.

GILMORE: She ran my office.

JOHNSON: Wasn't she head of the Women's Division of the DNC?

GILMORE: No. Clare Jones was my secretary. She ran the Young Democrats of America's office. Charlie Markham

[39]
was her assistant.

JOHNSON: You presented a resolution on behalf of Roy Baker at one of these meetings, and suggested that he get a job with the Government. Was he ever hired by the Truman administration? Do you know?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: He was hired by the White House?

GILMORE: Yes. He was hired and he was down there for two or three years. There was a War Assets Administration, that had, I believe, a three-man committee, and he was appointed to that.

JOHNSON: Clarence Hicks, I suppose you're acquainted with him.

GILMORE: Well, that was Bonnie Hicks' husband. He was at Oak Ridge; I guess it was getting ready for nuclear power.

JOHNSON: In December, 1949, Clarence Hicks, whom we have quite a bit of correspondence on, wrote to the President saying he was not sure that Governor Forrest Smith would be the best choice to run against Senator Forrest Donnell. He recommended you as a candidate to run against Donnell, apparently for the Senate.

[40]

GILMORE: Well, that was a different Hicks. This was a guy that had known Truman back here in Missouri. Well, he was sort of an entrepreneur.

JOHNSON: Yes, he had an export-import business and...

GILMORE: Yes, C.D. Hicks.

JOHNSON: Yes, Clarence D. Hicks. Do you recall ever being urged to run for the Senate, the United States Senate, and did you ever talk to Truman about that possibility?

GILMORE: I never did. I found out later if I had, and had got my support behind me, it might have worked out all right. But I'm the one that really triggered Stu [Stuart] Symington to run for the Senate.

JOHNSON: Oh, how did that happen?

GILMORE: Well, the old Pendergast organization here in Kansas City had a fellow that they were going to run, named Buck [J.E.] Taylor. Buck was attorney general of Missouri for eight years, and he was a nice guy, but he just had to get drunk every so often. And, you know, when Truman was in the Senate, we had this other Senator -- Bennett Clark -- who had to get drunk every so often too.

[41]

JOHNSON: You're talking about Missouri Senator "Champ" Clark?

GILMORE: Yes sir. You'd just get ready to where you needed him, where the Democrat party needed him, and goddamn he had to get on a drunk. I've seen him with his head down on the desk when Harry Truman was in the Senate, and Truman saw it too, because they were in there together. I didn't want us to have this Buck Taylor elected. We had two Republican Senators in the United States Senate about the time they wanted to run Buck Taylor. One of them was...

JOHNSON: Was one of them Kem?

GILMORE: Yes, one of them was James P. Kem and the other was Forrest Donnell; they were Republicans. And the reason they had Republicans in the Senate is because this whole Pendergast organization throughout the State, they didn't want somebody in there unless they could tell him what to do, and they ran people that the Missourians had had enough of. They ran people you couldn't get elected.

So, I wanted Symington to run. He had been under Truman, but Symington wasn't a politician when I was trying to get him to run for the United States Senate. I didn't have any idea which party he belonged to;

[42]

neither did anybody else. He had come out to St. Louis during the war years and taken over an ailing business.

JOHNSON: That was Emerson...

GILMORE: Emerson Electric, and made it work out real good and made some money. He was on the board of Mercantile Bank in St. Louis. Clark Clifford was from St. Louis and he had recommended to Truman that you get this guy Symington out here to help you with some of these jobs. He went out there first as Surplus Property Administrator, I believe, and then he was the first Secretary of the Air Force when they created an Air Force. You see, we didn't have an Air Force by itself until 1947.

Later the RFC got in trouble, the chairman of the RFC and some of his buddies. The guy who got him in trouble was from Texas. That's a long time ago. At my age you don't remember. Well, anyhow, Truman got legislation to appoint a one-man administrator [of the RFC]. He didn't have a bunch of people on committees; it was one man, and he appointed Symington. And Symington said, "I want to run this in a gold fish bowl," and he did. He had had about five assignments from Truman and he had done a real fine job on all of them, and so here I go out there telling Truman, "Let's

[43]

get this guy Symington to run. He's a good man, Symington." Truman said, "I don't even know he's a Democrat." I said, "Well, Boss, he's done all these jobs for you." He said, "He's a hell of a fine administrator." But he said, "Now, my old crowd out there in Missouri, they've picked out Buck Taylor to be the next Senator." And I said, "Well, you know, they picked out some Democrats to be in the Senate before too, but after you they got all Republicans. That's what they're going to get another, maybe."

We talked about Buck Taylor, and I said, "You know, Boss, you've had a drunk over here with you, and that's what Buck Taylor would do. Here he was for eight years as Missouri Attorney General and everybody that had anything to do with him knew that Buck was a hell of a nice guy but he had to get drunk every so often." Well, Truman told me, "Now, you go out there and you talk to J.V. Conran, Jim Pendergast, Tony Sestrik in St. Louis, and Dick Nacy in Jefferson City and get something started and see if we can get them to get off of Buck, because I want to win." Well, I said, "Boss, those guys won't pay a damn bit of attention to me. They've been in this organization when I was in college even. I can't." "Well," he said, "you quit tampering with this Symington business, if you can't get them to at least

[44]

come and talk to me."

Symington, I had already been talking to him. He said he was through with Government; he was going to get out of it. He was going to take two weeks and go down to Nassau for a vacation, and he said, "Then I'm going out to San Francisco because Trans-America wants me to come out there. They want to talk to me about being chairman of Trans-America. They'll pay me \$150,000 a year," which at that time was a lot of money. "And then they'll give me a contract where I can make some money on the stock options," you know. So, the President tells me to lay off.

So I go over and I tell Symington, "Well, I might as well have been wasting my breath; you couldn't run if you wanted to." He said, "What the hell do you mean?" I said, "The Boss just told me you couldn't run." He said, "Now, come again, are you real sure?" I said, "I'm real sure, and he told me why. He said you're a fine fellow, a fine administrator, but his old crowd in Missouri has already picked out who's going to be the next Senator." And he said [of Symington], "He's not going to be the next Senator if I can help it." Symington said, "I'm going to Nassau for two weeks and when I get back, we'll talk about it."

So I came back and went to St. Louis and got hold

[45]

of the other leading Democrats over there, who didn't belong to this old Pendergast organization; one was Jake Lashley, another leading Democrat. When Symington started back from Nassau these guys went down to Miami and met him so they could talk to him down there, before he ever got back here. They talked him into coming back to St. Louis and going down to Jeff [Jefferson] City to file to run for the Senate. When he came to Jeff City that day to file, it was the first time he had ever been in Jefferson City. He had never been in any counties in Missouri, he told me, except St. Louis, St. Louis County and Jackson County. He said, "Oh, I might have been somewhere else when I went bird hunting with somebody."

Well, after he had filed, I breezed into the Democratic National Committee headquarters. India Edwards was the vice chairman of the Democrat Committee; she was the one in charge of the Womens' Division. She was a tough old gal. She called this Clare Jones and told her, "Send Gilly around here to see me." That's what they all called me. So I went there [to India Edwards] and she said, "You better get your ass out of town." That's her language. I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "That man over at the White House has got some switches cut for you and he's going to switch you all the way back to Missouri." She said that was just what he told her, and

[46]

of course, I didn't stop to ask her why. I didn't go back to my office; I went right back over to the hotel, checked out, got my baggage and went to the airport. Didn't even wait to get a reservation. I went there and stayed until I could get on the airplane, because I knew when Mr. Truman got pissed off at you, at anybody, he had a temper like a wildcat. And if he told India he had switches cut for me, he meant it.

Well, anyhow, there's only six weeks until the primary, and Symington got the nomination and Buck Taylor didn't. I was back in good graces again. He never said a word to me about it.

JOHNSON: Well, what year was it that Symington got that nomination?

GILMORE: That was in '52.

JOHNSON: All right, in 1950 I think it was [Thomas] Hennings that won election as a Democrat.

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: He was the first senator that Truman liked, I guess, since Clark left the Senate -- since the Missouri Democrats had left the Senate. Did you campaign at all for Senator Hennings?

[47]

GILMORE: Yes. Tom Hennings was a St. Louis lawyer. He had been in the House but he wasn't in the House at the time he ran for the Senate. He had trouble with his drinking in the House, and actually, that's how we happened to have a Republican in there. Tom Hennings had a law suit with me about that time down in Southeast Missouri. He was a hell of a fine guy, but he had to get drunk once in a while, too.

JOHNSON: Well, if he won in 1950, this was not in line with what was going on in the rest of the country, because in 1950 the Democrats did lose some seats in the Congress, even though Truman had gone out campaigning for them. Of course, this was after the Korean war started.

GILMORE: We had an old fellow here that, let's see, had been the Attorney General in Missouri for the Pendergast organization. The guy I'm talking about had run sometime before and he got beat by Forrest Donnell. Forrest Donnell had been Governor of Missouri.

JOHNSON: So Donnell became Governor, and then he ran for the Senate, and became a Senator from Missouri?

GILMORE: Yes. He became a Senator from Missouri in...

JOHNSON: He just had one term?

[48]

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And then he was defeated in '50 by Hennings?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: So he had been elected in '44. And then in '52 Senator [James P.] Kem was defeated by Symington in the general election.

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: So now Missouri is back to two Democrat Senators, again, in 1953.

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And Truman feels better about that. So you got back in his good graces?

GILMORE: Well, I was only out of his good graces for a short period of time. I triggered Symington into that, and of course, others did too, but I'm the only one that really pushed it with Truman.

JOHNSON: What was Truman's objection to that again?

GILMORE: His old crowd here in Missouri had already picked Buck Taylor.

JOHNSON: He thought he had to go along with Taylor, even

[49]

though he knew of his flaws?

GILMORE: Well, he knew, sure; everybody knew, because it was obvious.

JOHNSON: But it was party loyalty?

GILMORE: Well, you know, that party is what put him in there. But he was a different kind of fellow than these guys were. I mean, hell, the Democrat party if it hadn't been for Truman would have quit even electing Governors of Missouri. Truman was the one that got us out of that situation.

JOHNSON: Did you know Stark at all?

GILMORE: I knew Lloyd Stark. Well, I can't put my hands on the word. He was a sort of a demagogue. He was a well-principled fellow, but he didn't want any back-talk out of anybody.

JOHNSON: He went in and told Truman he wouldn't run against Truman if he decided to run again in 1940, and Truman figured out that he was going to run, and he did. He ran against him in spite of what he told him.

GILMORE: Well, that's what you could expect out of Stark. Stark was not too popular.

[50]

JOHNSON: Hinkle Statler, do you know anything about him?

GILMORE: Yes, he was with me when I went down to the Morrison Hotel in Chicago to see Truman when Truman was Vice President. Hinkle had been a former mayor of Cape Girardeau. He was probably four, five, six years older than me. He's one of the fellows I had helped get an appointment in the Navy. We were together when we went down to see Truman at the Morrison Hotel.

JOHNSON: Well, in January, 1951, you wrote a letter regarding him. I haven't seen the letter, but Truman in his reply said, "I think a great deal of young Statler. I've always thought he had a great career in front of him, and I still think he has." Did Statler become a politician, or official, of some importance?

GILMORE: Well, I got him a job with the Missouri government in charge of the automobile division, Missouri licensing and whatnot. And he had got hurt when he was in the Navy. He was another one of those guys that decided that he had to get drunk every so often, and he finally drank himself to death; a fine fellow.

JOHNSON: In July of '51 you wrote the President inviting him to attend the national convention of Young Democrats in St. Louis. This would have been your swan song, so to

[51]

speak, and he said he hoped he would be able to be there. But then he had to decline.

GILMORE: Well, he talked India Edwards into doing that.

JOHNSON: How many times do you think you met with Truman while he was President?

GILMORE: Well, I was supposed to go over there once a month.

JOHNSON: You made it almost once a month after '49?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you had these private conversations with him?

GILMORE: Always private, yes.

JOHNSON: And the subject usually was what, Missouri politics?

GILMORE: Yes. I was supposed to tell him what I'm finding out. But the way it turned out, he didn't like what was going on, and he was telling me what they had to do. He had this national health program, you know. I'd been up into Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, all in one trip. I came back, and I told him, "Boss, they're not going to buy this program out there; they're opposed to it. They call it socialized medicine." He flared up and said, "I don't give a goddamn whether they

[52]

like it or not; we'll cram it down their throats."

JOHNSON: What other kind of reports did you give him?

GILMORE: Well, just what I was finding.

JOHNSON: Well, how about the civil rights issue? Were you reporting to him on that, how desegregation was going? Did it seem popular opinion was shifting in his favor?

GILMORE: Gradually, very gradually.

JOHNSON: Well, of course, he won the election in '48 in spite of the defection of the Dixiecrats.

GILMORE: Well, that's exactly right. That gave him enough "oomph" to where he was going to do it further.

JOHNSON: Well, the Korean war started while you were president of the Young Democrats too, I think. You became president in 1949, and the Korean war started in June of 1950.

GILMORE: Well, I didn't remember that.

JOHNSON: You didn't talk to him about popular support for the war, the Korean war?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: I guess you didn't have much time to practice law

[53]
during those two years then did you?

GILMORE: No, that's one of the reasons that I thought I had to get out of politics. You've got to make a living for your family.

JOHNSON: Well, did it pay decently?

GILMORE: It didn't pay anything.

JOHNSON: A volunteer? Just got your expenses, travel and that sort?

GILMORE: Yes, I had an appropriation from the Democrat National Committee of \$80,000 a year.

JOHNSON: Of \$80,000 for the Young Democrats. Was that when Bill Boyle was chairman? Let's see, there was [Robert] Hannegan.

GILMORE: Hannegan died.

JOHNSON: He was replaced by [J. Howard] McGrath, and then Boyle apparently replaced McGrath. In late 1951 Frank McKinney took Boyle's place, but Boyle is the one that you dealt with, is that right?

GILMORE: Yes. Frank McKinney had a boy over there by the name of Robertson. Their state chairman had been one of those people that met with us here in Kansas City, where

[54]

it was agreed on me [as president of the Young Democrats]. That state chairman was Ira Haymaker, and he's one of the reasons I went to see Truman. I just knew, that even though Ira Haymaker was here and he agreed with what we did, I knew that as soon as he got home he was just going to jump the fences and try to get everybody to switch back to Robertson. Robertson was a nice guy, but they wanted to have the Young Democrats of America decide whether, or not.

JOHNSON: Well, the Taft-Hartley Act was another issue. I notice in your convention in 1951, the last one when you were president, that there were resolutions calling on President Truman to run for reelection in '52, urging that 18 year olds be given the right to vote, advocating repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, demanding the ouster of McCarthy from the U.S. Senate, and praising Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

Of course, by this time, MacArthur had been fired. General MacArthur was fired in April 1951. This convention was in October of '51, so he had already been fired. You didn't discuss this issue with Truman, about him being fired?

GILMORE: No, everybody thought he had ought to be fired. He wasn't elected to be Commander-in-Chief, no matter how

[55]

good a war general he was. Truman fired him, and everybody that I ever knew thought he did the right thing.

JOHNSON: And, of course, Joe McCarthy was unpopular with...

GILMORE: Everybody. And he was nuts.

JOHNSON: I guess this is your last report, in September of '51, to the members of the Young Democrats. You said, "I have found that a good many of our citizens are content merely to criticize the administration and the governmental agencies. Good citizens should realize that it is their responsibility as well as the responsibility of our officials to make a continuous study of the affairs of our government and to make helpful suggestions and promote their ideas and ideals which can be done only by taking an active part on election day." Of course, when you get into '51, and '52, we're into so-called corruption; we've got some of these scandals -- the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the RFC, and the deepfreezes. Korea becomes an issue, after that war breaks out, and communism in Government is made an issue by McCarthy and his people. Could you see that those things were causing problems for the Democrats in the campaign of '52?

[56]

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: After you left the Young Democrats, did you remain active after that, or did you drop out?

GILMORE: I resigned from the Missouri senate a year before my term was up, because we had a vacancy in the Circuit Judgeship down in my country. By that time I decided I didn't want a career in politics, and here I am in the senate, and you've got to have a career in politics or you can't be there. So, I decided to be a judge, because the constitution of Missouri says that judges cannot take any part in political elections.

JOHNSON: Well, before that time, apparently there had been some sentiment for you replacing Boyle.

GILMORE: There was some, yes.

JOHNSON: Were you interested in that possibility?

GILMORE: I didn't ever say I wouldn't be interested in it, but I wasn't really interested in it, either.

JOHNSON: John R. Hahn, reporter for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and farmer down there, wrote a very glowing letter about you. I guess he was promoting you to become perhaps more active in government. He wanted you to be considered for the candidacy of chairman of the

[57]
DNC.

GILMORE: Oh, Johnny Hahn, yes. He was from my part of the country down there and his dad was a farmer. He had real bad lungs, and he went through journalism school at Missouri U. He got to be political writer for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. He had a column he called "Along the Political Trails." Well, hell, he was always having to go to the hospital down around Vernon, Missouri, the hospital for lungs, what do you call that? Well, anyhow, my wife and I always took care of Johnny; we took him to the hospital all the time. Hell, he thought I ought to be king. Naturally he was strong for me.

JOHNSON: Okay, so you resigned at the end of 1951 to become circuit judge. How did you get that appointment as circuit judge? Did the Governor make those appointments to the State Circuit Court?

GILMORE: Yes. Governor Forrest Smith. [The Governor appointed individuals only to fill unexpired terms caused by resignation or death. The judgeship otherwise was elective.]

JOHNSON: Governor Forrest Smith appointed you as circuit judge. This isn't something that he would have had to consult with Truman about, I suppose.

[58]

GILMORE: No, as a matter of fact, Forrest Smith belonged to the opposite group of Democrats here in Jackson County. You know, there were the Goats and the...

JOHNSON: The Rabbits.

GILMORE: Yes. I don't know which Forrest Smith was, but he belonged to the one that wasn't Truman's. And they didn't get along worth a damn. They would have been better off if they would have. Forrest Smith had a legal aide, Jim Meredith, and Forrest wanted me to talk to the President and see if they could get the President to invite him down to Washington, well, just to patch things up. Now, this was after Truman was President, you know, and Forrest was Governor. So, naturally, I told him I would talk to the President about it, because I had to talk to him anyhow once a month. (Jim Meredith, his aide, became a Federal judge, and just died here in December). As I said, he was Forrest's legal aide, so I saw a chance to get old Jim out of there for a trip to Washington. We were buddies. I said to Forrest, "Why, sure, but why don't you let your legal aide go with me when I talk to him?" Well, he thought that was all right. He agreed to that, and that meant his expenses were paid.

So, we got down there and I called Matt Connelly.

[59]

I said, "I need to come over and make a report." Well, he gave me a time that day, like at 2 o'clock. I said, "I've got the legal advisor to Forrest Smith, the Governor of Missouri, here with me; could I bring him along?" Matt said, "Well, let me call you back." So, he called me back and he said, "The boss said for you to come over here by yourself."

So, then I got over there, and Truman had his horns out you know. He said, "Who's this fellow Meredith you've got with you?" I told him, and he said, "What do you want to bring him over for?" I said, "Well, Forrest wanted me to talk to you about patching things up." He said, "You tell that old, no good sonofabitch if he wants to talk to me, act like a man and get his ass off his desk and get on his feet, call me on the phone, and ask me if he can come down here and see me. I don't want to talk to his flunkies."

So, naturally, I didn't tell Forrest that, you know. I told Forrest one thing which was the truth. I was in the Missouri Senate, and Truman was up for inauguration. I guess the senate just opened; maybe we had started the first two or three days, and then we were to take a recess and go off to the Inauguration in Washington. We passed a real quick resolution asking Governor Smith to authorize us to take the Missouri

[60]

University band to Truman's inauguration. Three or four of us went in to talk to Forrest about it. And old Forrest, you know, he'd get his hair down in his eyes and he'd look at his feet, and every once in a while he'd roll that hair back; hell, by the time he got through thinking about it, the Inaugural was over. So after he sent me down there to ask the President about patching things up, I said to him, "The President did say that it would be a lot easier to patch things up if you had sent the Missouri U band down there to his Inauguration."

JOHNSON: In '49.

GILMORE: Yes. Well, anyhow, you see, Barkley was Vice President and Kentucky sent two bands down there, one from a state university and one from a state college.

JOHNSON: And we didn't have any from Missouri?

GILMORE: No sir.

JOHNSON: And Smith had blocked that.

I wonder if that would have been your meeting with the President in February 1952. On February 15th you visited Truman in the Oval Office. I don't have any more information on that, but do you think that was the visit you're talking about? This one where you had

[61]

Meredith with you?

GILMORE: Yes, that might have been.

JOHNSON: This was a few weeks after you had become circuit judge?

GILMORE: I became circuit judge on the first of January.

JOHNSON: All right, so that was the purpose of that meeting then.

GILMORE: I really thought that meeting was while I was still President of the Young Democrats, but I might be confused about that.

JOHNSON: This one with Meredith? When Meredith was with you?

GILMORE: Right. Yes.

JOHNSON: You think it may have been while you were President of the Young Democrats, that you had this meeting that you talked about Forrest Smith?

GILMORE: Fixing things up, patching things up.

JOHNSON: That may have been one of those unannounced, or unrecorded, off-the-record meetings, I guess.

GILMORE: Yes.

[62]

JOHNSON: In July 1952 Truman wrote you a letter marked "Personal" and said he was somewhat disappointed when the "Organization," and he used the capital "O," failed to send Sid Solomon to Washington as a National Committeeman. He said, "As nearly as I can find out, the man they elected to the National Committee knows nothing whatever about Missouri politics and it is not to the best interest of the Party for that to happen." And he said, "Of course, I wasn't

there and I don't know the facts but if the Young Democrats do not carry on the Organization which we have been able to build up in Missouri -- a victory organization for many years -- "

GILMORE: Now, right there; I've got that letter. I'd say he saw that as a conflict. Go ahead, read the rest of it.

JOHNSON: He said, "we will probably continue to have Kems and Donnells in the Senate, which is about as bad as it can be for the great State of Missouri. In fact, Missouri hasn't been represented in the Senate, until Tom Hennings came there, since Bennett Clark and I left there."

GILMORE: Yes. Now, my idea about that, "we're going to continue to have Kems," and what's his name?

[63]

JOHNSON: Donnell.

GILMORE: Yes. Well, his organization that he's talking about there, I did something they didn't like, because I wanted to get Symington elected.

JOHNSON: This is July of '52, so the primary is just in the offing. The primary would be in August wouldn't it?

GILMORE: Yes, that's right.

JOHNSON: So, this is just before the primary.

GILMORE: All right, you see, he didn't believe this, but if the organization had had their way, they would have elected Buck Taylor.

JOHNSON: They would have nominated him.

GILMORE: Yes. And he wouldn't have got elected. The last two [Republicans], the reason they got elected was because his organization put up candidates that people in Missouri wouldn't tolerate.

JOHNSON: You're talking about the remnants of the Pendergast organization, the Goats?

GILMORE: Yes. Now, we went to the state convention in Jefferson City. Symington said that I was the first one

[64]

that ever talked to him about running for the Senate. I was doing everything in the world I could to help him get nominated in the primary. I was circuit court judge and J.V. Conran, down in New Madrid County, wrote the Supreme Court justices a letter saying, "This guy Gilmore is out here taking part in this campaign for Symington." Of course, Conran was for Buck Taylor. He said, "He's a circuit judge and the [Missouri] Constitution says you can't do that when you're a

circuit judge." They met and the one designated to do so called me up; they didn't write me a letter, they called me up and said they were sending me a letter, because they wanted me to know that their decision was that I'm a candidate for reelection as circuit judge, even though I was holding that job. When I was appointed, that was for the last year of the last fellow that had been elected. So, when I became circuit judge on the first of January 1952, I also became a candidate for reelection for a full term. I knew what the constitution said, but if they raised too much hell about it I was going to resign and do nothing but work for Symington.

Now, at the state convention, here in Missouri, of course, I had been doing what they said, helping Symington, and [supposedly] violating the constitution.

[65]

They said [in effect], "You're a candidate for reelection, and we cannot enforce a constitutional provision that would make you or someone like you impossible to campaign for yourself, and in doing so we are" -- they used some real good language -- "we are not unmindful of the fact that in your own campaign you sometimes have to support other people in order to get elected yourself." Well, what I had done that caused them to get on my duster about this, I was trying to help Symington. All right, we go ahead to the convention in St. Louis. Stu Symington, before he got into politics, was very naive; he didn't know that they did bad things in politics like they do. You had to watch out for him being naive. Jim Meredith was his campaign manager, the fellow that worked for Smith.

So, right at the time the convention was going on, they decided that they were going to let Sid Solomon be State Chairman. Well, hell, I thought, "What you guys are going to do, you're just going to open a door and let Sid Solomon help get you defeated for nomination for Senator, because Sid Solomon belonged to that old crowd that was going to nominate Buck Taylor."

JOHNSON: But Truman was saying Sid Solomon was his choice.

GILMORE: Well, he wasn't Truman's choice, but he was the

[66]

choice of this organization. My idea was that I'm not worried about who's going to be state chairman right now; I'm going to worry about who's going to be United States Senator. But I thought Truman would have had a conflict there in that letter.

JOHNSON: Well, of course, later on, he promoted Symington to run for President in 1960.

GILMORE: He sure as the world did, because when Symington got up there, he became one of the finest United States Senators they had. Truman, of course, recognized that.

JOHNSON: Did you have to run for election as circuit judge then?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you had to be nominated in that primary in August of '52, and then you had to win the general election in November, which you apparently did, against, I suppose, a Republican.

GILMORE: Yes. Well, his name was J. Grant Fyre.

JOHNSON: So you defeated him and you were elected for what, a four-year term?

GILMORE: Yes.

[67]

JOHNSON: Toward the end of that term, at the end of August 1955, you resigned as circuit judge.

GILMORE: I resigned because they had asked me to come up here to be general counsel, at Kansas City Life.

JOHNSON: Kansas City Life Insurance Company.

GILMORE: They had asked me the year before and I had told them to give me time to make up my mind, and get my politics straightened out. I said I would make up my mind by the end of 1954. Actually, in the summer of '55 I made up my mind and I resigned at the end of August.

JOHNSON: The 28th Judicial Circuit, is that in the bootheel area?

GILMORE: Cape Girardeau, Scott, and Mississippi Counties.

JOHNSON: How many judges?

GILMORE: Oh, just the one.

JOHNSON: Just the one.

GILMORE: One judge, three counties. That's why they call them circuits.

JOHNSON: Were you able to involve yourself in partisan politics in those three years, or did you...

[68]

GILMORE: I didn't after Symington got elected.

JOHNSON: Then, in '56, of course, there is a convention in Chicago and Truman goes up there and he's supporting Harriman.

GILMORE: Harriman didn't have a chance and Truman knew that.

JOHNSON: You did go to the convention in '56?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: You talked to Truman there?

GILMORE: Yes sir.

JOHNSON: When you came here in '55, after you moved here, did you meet with Truman much?

GILMORE: Used to have lunch with him.

JOHNSON: Did you? Downtown here when he had his office in the Federal Building?

GILMORE: Yes. Before he got the Library built.

JOHNSON: Before they built the Library. Were you involved in any of the promotions to raise money to build the Library?

GILMORE: No, I wasn't because I just moved here.

[69]

JOHNSON: But you were a friend of Lyman Field.

GILMORE: Yes, a good friend.

JOHNSON: Did you become friends with him after you moved out here?

GILMORE: No. I became friends with him while I was up in the Missouri Senate.

JOHNSON: Was he in the Missouri Senate?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: I think Lyman Field was a collector of [Thomas Hart] Benton paintings.

GILMORE: Oh, he was a great buddy of...

JOHNSON: Thomas Hart Benton?

GILMORE: Yes. He got me real well acquainted with Thomas Hart Benton.

JOHNSON: Apparently there are a number of meetings between you and Truman then, not only before but after he moved to the Library. You did go out to the Library several times? How many times?

GILMORE: I don't know, but several times.

[70]

JOHNSON: Did you happen to meet him in his office out there and visit with him?

GILMORE: Yes. And Miss Conway.

JOHNSON: How about 1960 when he was promoting Symington to run for the Presidency? Were you involved at all in the 1960 campaign?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What was your involvement?

GILMORE: Well, I started up a century club for Symington for President, and raised a bunch of money.

JOHNSON: For Symington. And Truman was behind you on that one then. Did you talk to Truman then about Symington?

GILMORE: Sure. Told him that we had to work around Stu's being naive. Clark Clifford has Symington believing he's way out front for him, and I could almost smell it that Clark Clifford had Symington in a position of being a stalking horse. Yes, I thought he was for Kennedy all the time.

JOHNSON: Clifford?

GILMORE: Yes. There wasn't anything wrong with that, except

[71]

Symington was listening to Clark's advice about "do this and don't do that." And that advice was, "You stand in the wings; you walk out at the right time, in your shining white armor on a white steed, and you you're not obligated to anybody. When you become President -- and by God, you can be President -- you don't have to kowtow to all of these politicians." And that sounded good to Symington. Jim Meredith ran my campaign when I was running for president, Young Democratic Clubs of America. So, when Symington ran for the Senate, Jim was his campaign manager there. Jim and I were always together. I went to his funeral here two months ago. Jim felt the same way I did. We were down here in a hotel room in Springfield, Missouri having a Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner each spring, and Symington was trying to tell Jim Meredith and me that you boys just don't know anything about this campaign. We said you run for President like you'd run for County Sheriff. He wanted not to let anybody know he was to be a candidate; he wants to be drafted. We said, "You announce, you advertise it, you tell everybody that you want to be President. Seek their help."

I remember him saying, "Oh, no, no, dear boy. Clark is telling me how to do this." I'm using his language. He said, "You wait in the wings, and at the

[72]

right time, at the convention, there's the man you want; you ride out on your white steed in your shining armor." That was his language.

JOHNSON: Primaries were beginning to become important, too, weren't they, in those days. Well, I'm thinking of 1960; Kennedy had already gotten the votes in the state primaries hadn't he, before the convention? And that's when Clark Clifford was giving Symington this advice about remaining in the wings and coming on at the convention, waiting until...

GILMORE: No, our conversation about that was before we ever went out to Los Angeles, down at Springfield, Missouri in a hotel room. Now, of course, if your state happens to be one of the states that the party group gets together and nominates somebody for something, that doesn't have any affect on the National Convention at all.

JOHNSON: You may remember that the primary in West Virginia was apparently what sank Humphrey in 1960; that seemed to put him out of the running when Kennedy won the primary, the party primary.

GILMORE: In West Virginia?

JOHNSON: In West Virginia in 1960.

[73]

GILMORE: That just meant that the party organization would like Kennedy to go to the convention with that state's support behind him.

JOHNSON: These pledged...

GILMORE: Delegates.

JOHNSON: So he already had these pledged delegates from the primaries. In Missouri was it was a primary, or was it a convention, that selected the delegates to the convention?

GILMORE: Well, the Democrat Party, and Republican Party, each has a convention of its own, and the Democrats nominate their man, and so do the Republicans. But then they have a primary in their own state...

JOHNSON: I see, you're referring to the August primaries, which involve state and local offices.

GILMORE: Well, you know, you can have an open convention, and they could disregard what any of the states have done.

JOHNSON: Well, Truman refused to go to Los Angeles to that convention, because he said, "It was rigged by the Kennedys."

[74]

GILMORE: It sure as hell was.

JOHNSON: Did you go to that convention in Los Angeles?

GILMORE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Were you out to the Library when Stuart Symington and John Kennedy and Scoop [Henry] Jackson sat down with Harry Truman for a news conference?

GILMORE: No. No, I wasn't there.

JOHNSON: Kennedy came out to the Library to patch things up with Harry Truman, and I'm sure Symington was there to help the process. But you weren't there for that.

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: But you were in Los Angeles.

GILMORE: I was there. As a matter of fact, I had told Symington, "I've got \$59,000." He had said before, "Any money raised, just keep it until I tell you." And he said, "If I don't go, you can refund it to the people," because he didn't want to take somebody's money. He wanted to be President but he didn't want to tell anybody he wanted to be. That's where Clark Clifford came in. So, when we got out there, I signed in with his headquarters, and told him that I got so much money,

[75]

\$59,000 I believe it was, and asked what do I do with it? He said, "Don't do anything until I tell you." In two or three days he told me to turn it over to a fellow from Oklahoma, who was an assistant secretary of the Air Force when Symington was Secretary of the Air Force. What was his name? It was Harold Stuart. His background was in this Skelly Oil Company. He wanted me to turn that money over to him, because he was spending money for this and that and the other thing.

JOHNSON: Well, in other words, he had given up hope at this time of being nominated?

GILMORE: No, he had decided that he would settle for Vice President.

JOHNSON: Oh.

GILMORE: But he didn't want to get out until they had called the roll, and didn't. I guess they select the Vice President the next day, don't they after...

JOHNSON: Yes, usually it is the next night.

GILMORE: Well, we were all together in Symington's hotel suite that night after John Kennedy had been nominated. When he came to the hotel late that afternoon, it wasn't even dark yet; he said that he couldn't authorize us to

[76]

say a thing, but it looked like he would be the nominee for Vice President. Then, at 10 o'clock that night he told us to be sure and watch the TV in the morning; it was supposed to be announced. I was right in the room with Symington when it was announced. We knew it was going to be Symington because Jack Kennedy that night, after that 10 o'clock meeting, had told him it was going to be. We were all sitting there ready to celebrate, and boy, then the word came out it was Lyndon Johnson. Old Stu, all the blood drained out of his face; he just got all the way white. We didn't know what happened. But, you know, we found out in the meantime, that Mr. Sam Rayburn was the one that worked it out.

JOHNSON: Sam Rayburn?

GILMORE: Yes, sir, he convinced Kennedy's crowd that by God, they couldn't be elected without Texas.

JOHNSON: I think that Bobby Kennedy was kind of an intermediary between the Johnson people and the Kennedys.

GILMORE: Well, he not only was an intermediary, he called a lot of the shots for [John F.] Kennedy.

JOHNSON: You met the Kennedys out there then for the first time?

[77]

GILMORE: Oh, no, I knew Kennedy when I was president of the Young Democrats. He was in the House then.

JOHNSON: Yes, from Massachusetts. So you had met John Kennedy then while you were...

GILMORE: Not only met him, I formulated my opinion of him. He didn't have any interest in the Democrat Party. His dad's the one that had the interest; wanted him to go. Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. was a House member from New York, and Kennedy was a young House member from Boston. Over at the Democratic National Committee, we were looking for speakers for various state conventions, all the time. Well, you know, you had to be careful who you picked out to be. We couldn't send someone to a Young Democrat convention, some congressman from Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, anywhere in the south at that time; the civil rights thing was just heating up real good. We were looking all the time for some young member of Congress or the Senate to go up into these states where we couldn't send Southerners.

JOHNSON: In '48 was it James Roosevelt that tried to draft Eisenhower to run on the Democrat ticket?

GILMORE: I'm not familiar with that.

[78]

JOHNSON: You weren't involved in that plan to draft Eisenhower and replace Truman with Ike. That really rankled Truman.

GILMORE: Yes, as a matter of fact, Truman told me and others that he had tried to get Eisenhower to run for the Democratic nomination and that Eisenhower turned him down. [Mr. Gilmore does not recall when Truman made such an offer to Eisenhower, prior to the 1952 campaign.]

JOHNSON: This would have been in '52, instead of Stevenson?

GILMORE: Yes, that's right, instead of Stevenson. Truman felt that Stevenson had no chance of winning because, well, he said he should be in England, with his demeanor and all that. He's not a bad guy, but you can't run water up hill; you can't take Stevenson and elect him President.

JOHNSON: Yes, especially I suppose after Stevenson was so reluctant to run, and then decided finally that he would. Of course, Truman went out and campaigned for him. By this time you were busy as circuit judge, but you did promote Symington's candidacy.

GILMORE: Yes, that's right.

[79]

JOHNSON: Well, is there anything else that we should add here before we terminate?

GILMORE: Well, you know, you had to remind me of most of what we have talked about; it's been a long time ago and I haven't kept active. I'm like everybody else; I wish we could have another Harry Truman. Now apparently, the people around here say that Tom Pendergast was not a bad guy, but he turned bad because he got to doing too much gambling and betting; what they say here is, the "northend Dagos" take over the gambling business by furnishing him money to do his horse-race betting.

Now, since I've been here we had a building that Kansas City Life had built and it was faulty construction, built for TWA. We were having a lot of trouble about it because TWA had had their specifications, and we had architects and contractors that agreed this building had a lot of defects in it, because lift-slab type construction was new. We were trying to find out what caused this building to be defective. Among other things we got hold of an old architect that had been the architect when Truman was a Presiding Judge of the County Court when they built that courthouse downtown. This came about casually, us talking about building materials and things like that. He was telling us when they were getting ready to build

[80]

this courthouse, Truman was presiding judge of the county court, and he was one of the architects that was selected to supervise the construction of that building. And he was afraid that Truman would be in favor of Tom Pendergast's ready-mix concrete business, to furnish all of the concrete; but he said, "Truman really gave us a good lecture about that." He said he was snappy about it, and he meant what he said: "If I ever hear of an ounce of concrete going into that new building that's not up to specifications, you'll be fired right that minute. I want that courthouse to be built to perfection." And that was Truman for you.

JOHNSON: That was when they were building the courthouse.

GILMORE: That was when he was Presiding Judge, long before he became President.

JOHNSON: And perhaps you remember hearing about this incident where he was building the roads, the road program, and these two friends of Pendergast came in and tried to convince him that he should give them the contract. He said it was going to the lowest bidder and it was going to those that would meet the specifications.

GILMORE: Well, that was true of Harry Truman. I guess old

[81]

man Tom Pendergast figured out that here he was running around to send someone to the United States Senate, and that's a different ballgame than what he's accustomed to. So he had better send somebody that's all right. He knew this guy was honest and honorable, while other people just looked upon him as a pawn of Pendergast.

JOHNSON: The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* harped at him all the time, and yet he hired his old friend Charlie Ross to be his press secretary even though he had worked for the *Post-Dispatch*.

I guess a year or two ago you were out to the Library with the Tuskegee Airmen.

GILMORE: That was last year.

JOHNSON: Just a year ago, was it? How is it that you came out there with these people?

GILMORE: Well, while I was in the Navy during the last part of the war -- and I've told you about that -- we really integrated the Navy. It was hard to do but we did. I became a very good friend of Lester Granger. Lester Granger was a black; he was a graduate of Dartmouth, and so was Forrestal. He was executive director of the National Urban League. Now, that's the finest Negro organization that we've got in the country. They're not

[82]

rabblers like the NAACP. The NAACP wouldn't like it if they heard me say that, but if they don't like it they had better read some of their publications. They won't change their mind, but if anybody wants to argue about that -- the National Urban League is the finest thing in the world, a good organization, one that knew about integrating black people properly. Don't give them something just because they're black; give them something because they merited it and they

earned it, but don't deprive them of something either because they're black. Give them their just dues.

Mr. Granger and I got to be very good friends. The Tuskegee crowd, one of them happens to be Herman Johnson. Herman and I have been good friends ever since I've been to Kansas City, when we got acquainted. He was one of those Tuskegee airmen. They were looking for someone; every year when they have their meeting they've got to recognize somebody, and they were having their meeting in Kansas City. I guess for lack of someone else, Herman came up with my name because Les Granger and I knew one another real well, and he knew that in my trying to be helpful to the black people it wasn't some political thing; it was really because I thought that the blacks as people had been mistreated and misrepresented by a hell of a lot of white people.

[83]

I think that they ought to have what they are entitled to; that's why...

JOHNSON: Did you ever represent any black clients when you were a lawyer?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: Either for yourself or for Kansas City Life?

GILMORE: No.

JOHNSON: So it was mainly through your experience in the Navy, and then your friendship with these two gentlemen.

GILMORE: Yes. Well, when I was on the Police Board here we had a black fellow on there, John Wells; he was an M.D. He was a real fine guy, and he and I got along real well. He got along with everybody. Everett O'Neal is active in every service organization in town, and he and I have been friends since I first met him when I moved here; we're good friends.

JOHNSON: Well, okay, if there's nothing else, we'll call it a day.

GILMORE: I appreciate having the chance to talk with you.

JOHNSON: Well, thank you for your time and this information.

Index

Baker, Roy, 20, 38, 39
Barkley, Alben, 60
Benton, Thomas Hart, 69
Blackiston, Lolita, 38
Boyle, William, 16, 53, 56
Brown, Eddie, 18

Civil rights:

 Missouri State Legislature – 1949, 22-24, 26-27
 President Truman, 23ff., 35
 Executive Order 9981, 35
 U.S. Navy desegregation, 29-35
Clark, Bennett “Champ”, 40, 46, 62
Clifford, Clark, 42, 70-72, 74
Connelly, Matthew, 15-17, 37-38, 58
Conran, J. V., 7-8, 43, 64
Conway, Rose, 70

Donnell, Forrest, 39, 41, 47, 62, 63

Edwards, India, 45-46, 51
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 77, 78

Forrestal, James, 33, 81
Field, Lyman, 69
Fyre, J. Grant, 66

Gilmore, D.W., 22
Gilmore, Ernest G., 1, 4-5, 8
Gilmore, Ferd M., 2
Gilmore, George, 2
Gilmore, Maude B., 1
Glass, Kay, 18, 38
Granger, Lester, 33-34, 81-82

Hahn, John R., 57
Hankins, Ted, 26-27
Hannegan, Robert, 53
Harper, Roy, 5-6
Harriman, Averell, 68
Haymaker, Ira, 54
Hearnes, Warren, 3
Helm, Neal, 6, 18
Hennings, Thomas, 46-48, 62

Hicks, Clarence D., 39, 40
Hopkins, Harry, 35
Hunter, Elmo, 10

Jackson, "Scoop" Henry, 74
Jaffrin, Michael, 38
Johnson, Herman, 82
Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 18-19, 20, 76
Jones, Clare, 38, 45

Kefauver, Estes, 18-19
Kem, James P., 41, 48, 62-63
Kennedy, John F., 72-77
Kennedy, Robert, 76
Knox, Frank, 31

Long, Juanita Gilmore, 2
Lashley, Jake, 45
Lucas, Ray, 12

MacArthur, Douglas, 54
Markham, Charles, 38
McCarthy, Joseph, 55
McGrath, J. Howard, 53
McNutt, Paul, 29
McKinney, Frank, 53
Meredith, Jim, 58, 61, 65, 71
Mississippi County politics, 7-8, 29

Nacy, Richard, 43
National Health Insurance Proposal, 51-52
National Urban League, 23, 33, 81-82

O'Neal, Everett, 83

Pendergast, Jim, 43
Pendergast organization, 40-41, 45, 47-48, 63
Pendergast, Tom, 9, 79, 80, 81

Rayburn, Sam, 76
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 29, 31
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 10, 29, 31, 33
Roosevelt, Franklin, Jr. 77
Roosevelt, James, 77
Ross, Charlie, 81

Sestrik, Tony, 43
Smith, Forrest, 39, 57-59, 65
Solomon, Sid, 62, 65
Stark, Lloyd, 49
Statler, Hinkle, 50
Stevenson, Adlai, 78
Stuart, Harold, 75
Symington, Stuart, 40-45, 48, 63-66, 70-72, 74-76, 78

Taylor, (Buck) J. E., 40-43, 46, 48, 63-65
Taylor, Vern, 18
Truman, Harry. S., 4, 5-10, 13-24, 27, 29, 31-35, 37, 39, 40-54, 58-62, 65-66, 69-70,
73-74, 78-80
Truman Committee, 15
Tuskegee airmen, 82

Van Hicks, Mrs., 18

Wells, John, 83
Williamson, Elsa, 22
Wright, Ernestine Gilmore, 2
Young Democrats of America, 15-21, 23-27, 36, 50, 52-56, 62, 77