



father-in-law and I, had. He had had a partner and then his partner's son, Snow Martin and Snow Martin, Jr., and they left in '62, I think it was, and formed their own firm, and that left the two of us when we re-formed which had been Bryant, Martin, and Kibler, into Bryant and Kibler. Mr. Bryant was, at that time, in his seventies, and he, thought seriously about it, decided that he just would phase out his practice. It took a long time because he stayed active up until his nineties. But I joined, with his blessing and encouragement, joined with Chesterfield in 1964. I was either the twelfth or the thirteenth lawyer, I can't remember which, and we joined forces in a lot of common

the resurrection my father t

again, and gotten it. What was his role in the firm at that time? Was he a silent partner, would you say, or was he an actively involved individual?

K: Well, he was what we called a Class A partner – that's the status that I'm in now – but back at that time, members of Congress could be a member of a law firm and they separated out and didn't do work that had to do with their, you know, that the congressional duties would conflict with, or they couldn't represent anyone before the Congress, that sort of thing, of course, but the Senator had a very, very precise and high ethical standard. He wouldn't be involved in any practice of law at all; he felt it was just, while he was in the Senate the practice of law was something he should not be involved in, other than just lending his name to the firm that he had been maintained, and he was paid a small retainer. The Senator – we kept anything that was involved in the federal work, monies earned there, didn't go into the retainer the Senator got, but...

D: Did you have a shareholder situation too, with regard to profits, etc?

K: Well, we were not then, and are not now, a PA. We've al 7 (n) ab

Mr. Bryant had a year or two seniority in law, and Mr. Bryant, I think, if it got to it, I mean, he would have expected his name to be first, and frankly, I think the Senator would have agreed to that.

D: In those very early years, when you were with the firm, can you name some of the, maybe, let's say, three or four people that come to mind that you were working very closely with, besides Chesterfield, in those early years?

K: Well, there are some of us still there. Steve Grimes, who was – went on to the

really, by Chesterfield and me, to come and help form the first formalized Trade Association for the Florida Phosphate industry, which was called the Florida Phosphate Council.

D: Can you remember when that all happened?

K: About – it was – I was General Counsel for the Florida Citrus Commission from 1961 to 1965 – that was period that Farris Bryant was Governor.

D: And that would have overlapped with both of your firms then, I guess?

K: It did, it did – and I became – an

K: Oh no, it was always, always headquartered in Lakeland.

D: In Lakeland.

K: And it worked in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture...

D: OK, that's what I was thinking...

K: But it was a separate agency – it wasn't under the Department of Agriculture though -



D: You might even say, before that even – you might even have some experience before that.

K: Well, well, my first immersion in the legislative process took place in 19 – I'm trying to



D: I see, I see.

K: That became significant, and ...

D: And Mr. Searles was on top of that.

K: And he was on top of that. He was a very strong proponent after the legislation that allowed green stamps to be, there wasn't anything wrong with that, I mean, it was what Publix wanted and what Publix wanted, Publix was not nearly as big then obviously as they later became, but Roy, I know, represented, became the lobbyist for Sperry and Hutchinson after he left the legislature. He would be, he was tied to various interests. Now, the phosphate interest, he was a very strong proponent of phosphate and could be counted on in the House to introduce their legislation. But Lawton was always a friend of the phosphate industry, but there was a difference between Lawton's approach and Roy Searles and others. You never, you never could take Lawton for granted. Now, Lawton you had to go to and sell the bill or the position that you wanted, and Lawton would be inquiring, and he would listen to you and you knew, and he always, you know, was good to his friends. You could have access to him. But you couldn't ever get Lawton to commit on things ahead of time and you could not count on Lawton if you had anything controversial. He would look at it and he would end up, and I honestly believe that Lawton would always come down on the position the way he thought was fair and proper and what ought to be done. Now, he would always weigh in on the side of the local industry. It ought to be, that's what your representatives are for, and he would make those commitments that "I'll help you but I won't let you tell me what the positions are. I will listen to everything you want and I will try to give you everything you want as long as it meets the common good". And that was sort of the way he approached things. And he did that throughout his political career. I saw that very early with Lawton.

F: Do you remember who some of his closest associates were in the legislature? Obviously, we talked about Wilbur Boyd and if you'd like to say a little bit about that, but

But he, but Jimmy influenced Lawton in many ways because they had been in school together and they were similar thinkers.

D: Now is he still alive?

K: No, Jimmy died of cancer 15 years ago. And he had a son, Jimbo, who was a lawyer,

D: Well, I can go back and check that out.

K: And that election, it was a contested, after that particular election, which I think is fairly normal, I don't remember him having meaningful opposition, I don't know that he was ever unopposed, but Lawton was always, he was popular and his campaign approach, as I mentioned, it was a big, big political upset when he defeated Roy Searles, but he and Rhea undertook to go and call on everybody in the county, obviously they didn't do that, but they tried. They mapped it out. They went and knocked on doors

not going to run. Now, he had an active campaign for, I think it was, I think Claude Pepper ran against him.

D: Sixty-four?

K: Sixty-four. I believe that's who ran against him.

D: That would have been quite a struggle, I would imagine.

K: And it was. But, it's strange that that didn't stand right out, but Claude Pepper, I

D: There were also indications about Sam Gibbons running in the collection that I had looked at, there was a possibility that he was thinking about it. That is in a lot of the

very prominent in the cigar industry, very, very, very socially prominent, as well as part of the economic royalty of the Tampa cigar industry. Mildred was a beautiful, beautiful girl and a sorority sister of Nell's. And I know that Doyle was Farris Bryant's

K: Uh-uh. Not, well, I'm, it's just that there was the, which always is part of it, there was then a lot of the economic competition in the workforce between blacks and whites, and that always influenced a lot of the labor.

D: What about schools? Were schools an issue in that campaign? Desegregation or segregation? Or did that come up in the campaign as you recall?

K: It must have because...

D: Whether we're going to do it, whether we're not...

K: It must have because of *Brown versus Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*.

D: We're going to resist.

K: was in 64 and this was...

D: Well, that was 54.

K: I mean 54, yeah, 54.

D: In other words, I'm in favor of desegregation, I'm not in favor of it, that kind of thing, or we should resist, we should drag our feet? You know.

K: I don't, I don't remember.

D: You don't really remember that. Okay.