California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

HON. WALTER W. STIERN

California State Senator, 1959 - 1986

May 27 and June 4, 1987
Bakersfield, California

By Enid Hart Douglass
Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE		i
INTERVIEW HISTORY		iii
BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY		v
I	FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND	1
	[Session 1, May 27, 1987, Tape 1, Side A]	1
	Paternal Grandfather and Father	1
	Interest in Veterinary Medicine	11
	Washington State College of Veterinary Medicine	15
	Veterinary Practice in Bakersfield	26
	World War II: Military Veterinarian	27
	[Tape 1, Side B]	30
II	ELECTION TO STATE SENATE	47
	Decision to Run for State Senate	47
	First Campaign	52
	[Tape 2, Side A]	59
	Nature of the Senate in 1959 and Later	60
	President Pro Tem Hugh Burns	71
	Part-Time Legislator and Veterinarian	80
	Reapportionment of the Senate	82
	"Assemblyization" of the Senate	87
	[Tape 2, Side B]	90
III	INITIAL EXPERIENCES AND COMMITTEE SERVICE	92
	Agriculture Committee	93
	Public Health and Safety Committee	95
	Education Committee	105
IV	MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION	112
	Dorothy M. Donahoe	113
	The Case for Bakersfield State College	119
	[Tape 3, Side A]	123
	Death of Dorothy Donahoe	124
V	MAJOR ISSUES (1960)	130
	Squaw Valley Winter Olympics	130
	Abolition of Death Penalty	132
	Reapportionment	141
	California Water Plan	143
VI	GOVERNORS: EDMUND G. "PAT" BROWN AND EDMUND G. "JERRY" BROWN	155
	[Tape 3, Side B]	156
VII	THE FISHER ACT AND EXECUTIVE REORGANIZATION	163
	The Fisher Act	163
	Reorganization of Executive Branch	169

VIII	LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY STIERN (1959-1966)	171
	Public Cemetery Districts	173
	Hearings for Guardian Appointment	176
	Livestock Remedies and Bees	178
	Egg Marketing Standards	180
	Meat Inspection	184
	Tuberculosis Screening--School Personnel	187
	[Tape 4, Side A]	188
	Sanitation Standards for Farm Labor	194
	Community Colleges	197
	[End of Session 1]	206
	[Session 2, June 4, 1987, Tape 5, Side A]	206
IX	SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE	207
	Activities and Interests of Members	207
	School Unification	216
X	REAPPORTIONMENT AND 1966 ELECTION	222
	Senator Stiern's Campaign	222
	Changes in the Senate and Unruh's Influence	226
XI	SENATOR STIERN'S OFFICE AND CAMPAIGNS	235
	Staff Members	235
	[Tape 5, Side B]	237
	1970 Election	247
	1982 Election	258
XII	GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN	265
	Pressure for Vote on Tax Package	265
	[Tape 6, Side A]	269
	Veto of Dolwig Bill--Teacher's Salaries	269
	Relations with Legislators	279
	Misrepresentation of State Finances and Failure to Understand Postsecondary Education Plans	282
XIII	GOVERNORS GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN AND EDMUND G. BROWN, JR.	295
	George Deukmejian	295
	[Tape 6, Side B]	298
	Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown	309
XIV	COMMITTEE SERVICE	315
	Revenue and Taxation Committee	315
	Finance Committee	323
	Governmental Efficiency Committee	326
	[Tape 7, Side A]	328
XV	SENATE PRESIDENTS PRO TEM AND OTHER SENATORS	338
	Howard Way (1969-70)	339
	Jack Schrade (1970)	342
	James Mills (1971-1980)	348
	Randolph Collier	351
	Peter Behr Addresses "Vice of the Voice Vote"	355

XVI UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND GOVERNOR REAGAN 358
[Tape 7, Side B] 359

XVII STATE MEDICAL PRACTICES ACT 360

XVII LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS 367
Robert H. Finch (1967-Jan., 1969) 367
Glenn M. Anderson (1959-1966) 368
Ed Reinecke (Jan., 1969-Oct., 1974) 369
John L. Harmer (Oct., 1974-end 1974) and
Mervyn M. Dymally (1975-1978) 370
Mike Curb (1979-1982) 372
Leo T. McCarthy (1983-) 373

XVIII THE STATE SENATE IN THE 1970S 375
1971 Tax Law 375
Bicultural Education 377
Willie Brown and Martin Luther King Day 378
Voting Age 384
Select Committee on School Finance 386
Reapportionment and the 1974 Election 389
[Tape 8, Side A] 389
Proposition 1--1974 Election 400
Zenovich Challenge of Mills as Pro Tem 406
Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee 407
First Woman Elected to Senate 408
1978 Election 416
[Tape 8, Side B] 419

XIX THE STATE SENATE IN THE 1980S 426
David Roberti Becomes Pro Tem 426
Reapportionment (1981) 430
1986 Election 442

XX FINAL SENATE TERM (1982-1986) 449
Bakersfield State College 449
[Tape 9, Side A] 451
Community Colleges 452
Rules Committee 454
Ethics in the Senate and Nationally 460
Question of Full-Time Legislature 463
Recognition by Sacramento Union 468
[End of Session 2] 471

INDEX OF NAMES 471

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1985, Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A.B. 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985). This legislation established, under the administration of the California State Archives, a State Government Oral History Program "to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history."

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program. These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms. They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy. Further, they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state.

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California. They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff, advocates, members of the media, and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California.

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews, this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs.

Participating as cooperating institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are:

Oral History Program
History Department
California State University, Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California, Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid-free paper.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer/Editor

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Interview Time and Place

May 27, 1987
Home of Walter W. Stiern in Bakersfield, California
Morning session of 2 hours, thirty minutes
Afternoon session of 2 hours, thirty minutes

June 4, 1987
Home of Walter W. Stiern in Bakersfield, California
Morning session of 3 hours
Afternoon session of 3 hours

Editing

The interviewer/editor checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Insertions by the editor are bracketed.

In the summer of 1987, the edited transcript was forwarded to Walter W. Stiern, who did considerable editing as to detail in reviewing the Session 1 transcript. He clarified and added detail about his World War II experiences, his election to the senate, and his early service in the senate. He returned the approved manuscript in sections during December, 1987 and January, 1988.

The interviewer/editor prepared the introductory materials.

Sealed Material

Walter W. Stiern has sealed certain passages of his interview manuscript until January 15, 1998.

Papers

The legislative papers (bill records) of Walter W. Stiern are deposited in the California State Archives. He holds other files in Bakersfield, California.

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interviews are in the Oral History Program Office, Claremont Graduate School, along with the records relating to the interview. Archival tapes are deposited in the California State Archives.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Walter W. Stiern was born in San Diego, California, on March 18, 1914. His father, Walter Stiern, who was born in Bakersfield, held a teaching position in San Diego and married Mary Hazel Scribner, also from Bakersfield, in 1911. In 1919, they moved back to Bakersfield, where his father taught high school. Young Walter Stiern attended Kern County High School and Bakersfield Junior College. In 1938, he graduated from Washington State College with his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree and established a practice in Bakersfield. That same year, he married Alysjune Dunning, and the Stierns have two daughters.

During World War II, Walter Stiern served as an officer in the Veterinary Corps of the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1947. In 1945-47, he was stationed in the China-Burma-India Theater. He held the rank of major. He then resumed his veterinary practice in Bakersfield. Mr. Stiern was asked to serve as eastern Kern County manager for Adlai Stevenson's presidential campaign, and he then filled a vacancy on the Kern County Democratic Central Committee.

Although he had not previously held an elected office, in 1958, Walter Stiern won the 34th district seat in the California State Senate. He held this seat (now that of the 16th district) until he chose to retire in November of 1986. By this time, his twenty-eight years of service had made him the dean of the senate.

Throughout his senate tenure, Senator Stiern served on the Agriculture (called the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee beginning in 1972) and the Education Committees. He was chairman of the Public Health and Safety Committee (1963-1966) during his committee service from 1959 to 1966; and he served as chairman of the Revenue and Taxation Committee during his entire tenure on that committee (1967-1974). Beginning in 1979, he served as the chairman of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee until his retirement, with the responsibility of approving or rejecting requests for transfers of the state budget monies for one purpose or another, after the yearly budgets were enacted each fiscal year. The Legislative Analyst and his staff served as his committee staff.

Other committees Senator Stiern served on were: Business and Professions (1961-1966); Constitutional Amendments (1985-1986); Finance (1967-1986); Fish and Game (1963-1969); Governmental Efficiency (1967-1969); Insurance and Financial Institutions (1975-1976); and Military and Veterans Affairs (1961-1962). His major legislative interests have been in public education, postsecondary education, health and sanitation, and agriculture.

I. FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND
[Session 1, May 28, 1987]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Paternal Grandfather and Father

DOUGLASS: Senator Stiern, you were born in San Diego. Is that right?

STIERN: Yes, I was. Although we are a Bakersfield family for a number of generations. What happened was that my father was a teacher, and his first teaching job was in the San Diego schools. And so he was in San Diego. And my mother was a Bakersfield woman he met in San Diego after going down there to teach. And I was born in 1914, in San Diego.

Then he came back to the Bakersfield school system in 1919, right after the war. So, you know, from zero to kindergarten, I spent in San Diego. But all my formal schooling was here. Elementary, high school.

DOUGLASS: Did you go to the Bakersfield High School?

STIERN: It was called Kern County Union High School at that time. It was the only high school in Bakersfield at that time. I don't want to digress on this, but it undoubtedly was one of the biggest high schools in the state of

California; 6,000 students, eleven square blocks, a sixty-three bus system of modern buses (the biggest bus fleet in the United States in a high school). It was a union high school system. It was a big school.

DOUGLASS: Did your Dad teach in the high school?

STIERN: He graduated there in 1909, and he taught there from until almost. . . . Oh, he taught forty-three years.

DOUGLASS: What was his field?

STIERN: He was in manual arts. He was a woodshop teacher, and he was in radio construction--that was popular--and agricultural mechanics.

DOUGLASS: Both your mother and father came from families who had lived in this area for a long time?

STIERN: Yes, they did. My grandfather migrated from Germany to New York and came to California in 1886. And the family grew up here. My father's family. Then myself, my brothers. My family grew up here. So if my daughters hadn't married and moved to other places, we'd be into a fourth generation situation here.

DOUGLASS: And this is true on your mother's side too?

STIERN: That's correct. And my mother was a Scribner, and that name is a pioneer name in the Bakersfield area. People who have been here a long, long time.

DOUGLASS: Your paternal grandfather, what did he do when

he came as an immigrant?

STIERN: He came to New York. He couldn't speak English. He was nineteen years old. In Germany, he woke up to the fact that the conscription of military labor for peasant-type boys like himself was heading for a war, you know, toughing up the boys. Marching on stubble wheat fields and all that kind of thing, and he was nineteen. He could see what was coming, and he decided he wanted to get out of there. So he came steerage to the United States and worked in upstate New York for some dairy farm German families so he could learn English. And then, for some reason, took a straight shot across the United States to San Diego, of all places. And I don't know that anybody ever really knew why, except there was a man there that he had known that was in a hotel and saloon business on the waterfront of San Diego. And he went down and worked with that man for a couple of years. Then he left there and came up to Santa Monica for a very short time in kind of a hotel dining area business there. He then went to Burbank when Burbank was nothing really and tried to farm potatoes because he knew farming and had started out doing that. The prices weren't right.

And then came directly to Bakersfield because that was the time of oil discovery in

this area, 1906, 1907. He heard about this little community up here, and he just came up and bought a piece of property here. And he was the laughing stock [Laughter] of this city, we are told, in that he bought a piece of ground that was so far north of Bakersfield, it was out in the river tules of the Kern River, where there was flooding. And he went into business in Bakersfield doing exactly the same thing that he did in San Diego and Santa Monica.

While in San Diego, he went back to Germany and married a woman who was widowed. Kind of a strange thing. A woman he had known as a boy had married a fisherman, and the fisherman was lost at sea, in the Baltic Sea, and left her with two little children, two girls that were four and two years old. He went back and married her, brought her to Bakersfield, and adopted these two children.

And so when they got into a kind of a rooming house, board and room and saloon thing for people working in the oil fields, as things developed, where my grandmother kept rooms upstairs in this little hotel, a frame kind of a thing. And my grandfather did the cooking and served beer and things downstairs. And they operated a place similar to what he had run into when he first came here. He did very well. He

bought some property , some rentals. I am always amazed at what peasant boys can do who come from foreign countries, just by hard work.

He lived until 1927, when he died. His name was not Stiern, which is interesting. His name was S-T-I-E-R, Stier. In Ellis Island's immigration an "N" was added. He didn't know what was going on because he didn't know the language. Finally, when he got his papers and things, here it says S-T-I-E-R-N. Well, he thought he was going to get in trouble. He might be deported--my name is wrong, I've given them misinformation--and checking it all out, found it was forty dollars to change the name and twenty dollars for an affadavit to do that. He just said, "Well, I'm in a new country. I've got a new name. It's going to be Stiern."

I remember, as a very small child, with German families in here, when they'd come and visit each other, they'd slur it a lot more than what we eventually did it. It became Schtiern, Schtiern. When June and I visited Germany a few years back, we noticed that in the telephone book, it was a very common name. You'll find two and three columns in Nurenberg of S-T-I-E-R, which, I understand, in German means a steer or a bull. And I've gotten kidded more than once by

people who know German saying, "Walter is very stubborn." [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: That's interesting. He was a self-made man.

STIERN: He really was. He early on did a lot of things on his own, and developed rentals. When he died, he was comfortable.

DOUGLASS: Your dad must have gone to college then?

STIERN: My father did not go to college. This is what's an interesting story. My father wanted to go to college more than anything in the world. My father was a very unusual man in high school. He was not only a great football player, an athlete at Kern County High School at that time, but he was a top student. They graded in numbers in those days, and we've got records on him, and he was always 98 and 99 and 100 in everything. He also was editor of the school paper and the business manager of the yearbook. He also had been taught by his German mother how to sew, and he would get in sewing contests against women in high school and win. [Laughter]

He could make buttonholes better than anybody could. He got razzed about that a lot. Can you think of being on a football team and winning a sewing contest! But he was a bright guy and he could have gone. But he didn't have the money to go to college at that time. And my grandfather took the attitude that you don't need

to go to college. I could make it my own way. You can make it too. And so that's what happened.

So he got involved in becoming a cabinetmaker with a man, where he apprenticed himself and became a cabinetmaker. During those years, back in that time (he graduated from high school in 1909 and was married in 1911) there was what was called the Smith-Hughes program in California.[1] Somebody started it. I think those two names are legislators or congressmen and that the money source was the federal government. This was set up that a person who had ability in a manual arts field, if he could show that he was outstanding, he could get what was called a Smith-Hughes certificate. My father tried that in woodshop, with his cabinetmaking and all, and made it that way. Other people did it with mechanics. You know, they would take a car that they would do everything to it and the fellow could put it together and drive it one hundred yards to show that he had ability.

But tied to that certificate was a commitment, and that was that you went to summer school every single summer. See, you were trying to catch up with what you didn't get as

1. The federal Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 encouraged establishment of vocational-technical courses.

an academician. So he started out in San Diego Normal School at the time that San Diego Normal School was there. And when he moved up here, he continued at Cal Poly [California Polytechnic College, San Luis Obispo]. Every summer he went to Cal Poly. He was trying to hold his own with other men that had gone the academic route.

DOUGLASS: He went to San Luis Obispo.

STIERN: He went to San Luis Obispo, and he went over there every summer.

DOUGLASS: Did the family stay here?

STIERN: We stayed here, and he went over there. He would come back once in awhile on weekends. And so when he was over there, he saw San Luis Obispo grow into what it is, which is the most popular campus in the CSU [California State University] system . And, as such, the Manual Arts Department and Farm Mechanics [Department] satisfied the Smith-Hughes requirement very well.

Kern County Union High School at that time had an Ag [Agricultural] Department with nine vocational ag teachers in it. And they were all University of California, Davis. One of them had come from back east. My father was considered part of that department as a farm mechanics instructor. But he held his own by

going to summer school for years and years and years.

DOUGLASS: Did he get any kind of a certificate for the summer work he did? Was it that he just kept going to summer school?

STIERN: That had to be filed with the state Department of Education.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But he didn't end with end with the equivalent of an AA [Associated Arts] degree for doing that?

STIERN: No. Never received a degree. He was able to hold his secondary certificate.

DOUGLASS: So every summer, it was summer school.

STIERN: That's right. It's an interesting program in that when you had a boy who couldn't get there any other way, had that kind of ability. Because what happened was a wonderful thing. My father turned into a fantastic teacher, and he was a disciplinarian and he was severe, didn't fool around. There were no accidents with our saws and things in his department. He was one of the first people that ever put orange circles around power machines. Nobody was inside that circle except the student working on that hand saw or jointer, or whatever it was.

At the same time, his German background, the "disciplinarianness" of that, which us four boys enjoyed when we grew up, was transferred to

those shop departments. And generations went through his hands, he taught forty-three years; and when he left that high school, it was like "Goodbye, Mr. Chips." The principal said, "We can replace the instructor, Walter Stiern, but we cannot replace the man as a teacher." [with emotion] I admit that I get emotional about it a little bit as I run into people all the time who are sixty, seventy years old and tell me, "I had your father in school, and I want you to know that I learned more from your father that I use on this ranch every day than anybody I have ever known."

DOUGLASS: That's quite a tribute.

STIERN: But it is to a teacher. He used to say. "Teachers don't get rich. What they do. They have the satisfaction of seeing their students succeed."

So my grandfather was wrong. My father had a lot on the ball. He was determined. He was as stubborn as his father. So what was interesting was once he retired, an interesting thing happened. Whenever they needed a manual arts person at Bakersfield College because somebody had to go on a two-week vacation or went on a sabbatical for a month, or something, they brought him in to teaching at Bakersfield College to handle that for a period because of

his forty-some-odd years experience. I am sure in his own heart and mind it delighted him that he was on a college campus doing something he had probably always dreamed he would want to do.

Interest in Veterinary Medicine

DOUGLASS: How was it that you got interested in veterinary medicine then?

STIERN: When I was a young boy, I knew I wanted to be a doctor of some kind. I don't know how, but I wanted to be a physician or a dentist or something to do with medicine. I knew that by the time I was a sophomore in high school that I was going to go that route if I could possibly do it. I never was allowed to go out for athletics in high school. My father would never allow me to do that. And it used to irk me because I would want to do like other boys did. He said, "If you can't make A's and B's without football, you'll never make it with it." Being pounded to pieces at practice and everything. "If you've got your sights set on university, then that's what you had better put your sights on. Forget the football. It isn't worth it." So I was strongly involved in Future Farmers and vocational agriculture, raising dairy cattle and that kind of thing, and poultry. When I was a senior in high school, I had 3,000 white leghorn hens and I had twelve head of registered

guernsey cattle. And that was what put me through part of my university costs, the money that I had made on this kind of thing.

And he was right. I wasn't that good a student through high school. I know the wisdom of it because I knew later that if I had gone out for athletics, I wouldn't have made it to the university. At that time in Bakersfield I was looking around. These were Depression years. Who was succeeding and who wasn't? And there were only two veterinary offices in Bakersfield, and that meant there were only two in Kern County. There was one firm on South Chester Avenue. It is called [ ] Edwards and [ ] Edwards. There was one firm over on Union Avenue, a man whose name was Dr. [ ] Van Sant. I could see well, there's not an overload of veterinarians. My father caught me one time operating on a chicken. [Laughter] This is kind of funny. I was about fifteen and a half years old. And I had opened up this chicken's croup and took out a lot of string and stuff out of the chicken, and then I put it all back together. And he saw the result of that, and he said, "Had you ever thought of veterinary medicine as a possibility? There are not a lot of veterinarians, and you like animals so much."

I just love animals.

And so I started to explore that, and what I found out was that there were only nine veterinary schools in the United States at that time. There are some twenty-eight now. Unfortunately, there are a few too many, I think, really, as things are working out. And so I got my sights set on going to veterinary school, and my dream--I was doing a lot of reading in those days, as some people do in high school--I was enamored with all the books that were being written in those days about headmasters and prep schools for Ivy League schools and going to schools like Amherst or Yale or Harvard. And Cornell had a School of Veterinary Medicine, and I kept thinking Cornell. But I was wondering. . . . My gosh, the trip back and forth across would mean going by train.

I had a strange experience in that I went as far as going through Kern County Union High School and doing one year in Bakersfield College, where I was marking time while I was making a little more money and my father was gathering a little more money. I went so far as putting in an application to go to Cornell. And I was heartbroken when I got it. Because when I got it, it was so strange. The Cornell

application, and I don't want to be condemning of it except that it started out "Is your father a Cornell graduate? What year? Is your mother a Cornell graduate? What year? Any relatives who are Cornell graduates? What year? Name friends that were Cornell graduates. What year?" I looked at that, and I thought this is hopeless, I don't have a prayer.

So then I ran into a couple of people that said, "You are on the wrong track anyway. Forget Cornell. It isn't that important. What you want to do is if you are going to live in California and practice as a veterinarian in California, then go to a western school which is going to push what plants are poisonous in the West and Pacific slope, what are the diseases that are prevalent in the western states." So then I pulled back, and I looked at three states that were equal distance from Bakersfield. I was looking at the transporation problem, partly. One is Texas A & M [Agricultural and Mechanical University] at College Station, Texas. One was Colorado A & M, which is now Colorado State University at Fort Collins. And then there is Washington State College at Pullman. I actually remember putting a compass on Bakersfield and swinging it an arc to see which

of these three schools was closer. And so a couple of men said, "Well, Washington State is on the Pacific slope. I think that is your best bet if you are a Californian to go there. We had no school in California. So Californians who wanted to go to veterinary school scampered anywhere they could go. Iowa State [University of Science and Technology], Michigan State [University], Kansas State [University]. Wherever they could get in. And happy to get in, because they were out-of-state students to those institutions.

Washington State College of Veterinary Medicine

I went to Washington State when I was nineteen years old. When I got there, I got a real shock. I thought I was going to be a little something unusual because I came from California. I thought "there won't be many Californians here." About half of the entering veterinary class were Californians. And the second thing, I didn't realize I was going to be the youngest person in my class at nineteen. The average in those years--when people started veterinary school--was twenty-three. It was a common thing for somebody to major in chemistry or pre-med or pharmacy, and then they would turn around and come on in at that age.

DOUGLASS: They had a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts]. So you were, in a sense, right out of high school, except one

year of junior college, and had to compete.

STIERN: That's right. Exactly. And it was a break, because I didn't have to do as much pre-veterinary medicine as is required today, and in the selection process, the pre-veterinary medicine thing is very important today.

DOUGLASS: So was it a three-year program?

STIERN: No. It was a four-year program. So I went a year to Bakersfield College, and then I went four years to Washington State. When I got there, I found out that the class was going to be forty-four students. Now, this was unusual to start with, in light of present-day classes in veterinary medicine. It's very small. Out of the forty-four students, there were eighteen of them that were from other states, most of them from California. And I was also the youngest person in class. There were married students in the class, and there were other people older than myself. And so that hangs in my memory because I remember sitting in [the] Education and in [the] Finance Committees in the California legislature, in the senate, looking at out-of-state students and what that was costing California and thinking and being very sympathetic because the State of Washington taxpayers had educated me.

Do you know what the out-of-state tuition

fee was at that time? I am almost shocked to tell you. It was seventy-five dollars a semester at Washington State. And so the taxpayers of that state really took a shellacking because they were educating people from Idaho and Montana and California and one from Hawaii and other places. And yet they were going back to their home states. So this always made me very sympathetic about out-of-staters, you know, to states that had done these things for us. And later on, I became interested in WICHE [Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education] and got into that program and represented California as a veterinarian-legislator.

DOUGLASS: What is WICHE?

STIERN: This commission assists intermountain and Pacific Coast states which do not have professional schools. Like in veterinary medicine; Wyoming, Utah, Montana, New Mexico, Arizona can put students into veterinary school in Colorado, Washington and California. Cal Berkeley [University of California, Berkeley] does this too in law.

DOUGLASS: Was this a group oriented only towards vets?

STIERN: All professional fields. So that program is working very, very well.

DOUGLASS: So you finished in four years.

STIERN: Finished in four years.

DOUGLASS: Did it get easier going after the first year or two?

STIERN: All my life I have had to fight from behind. A mistake was made in my education. And that was I was jumped a year when I was in the fifth grade. I never caught up, ever. When I went into high school, I was twelve and I weighed 112 pounds. I struggled constantly. Because when I was in a class, you know, the average high school class, women are said to be a little more mature than boys. And the boys were always bigger than I was. I was always fighting to catch up.

When I got to college, it was the same thing. I was nineteen years old and, you know, there are a lot of things in college that attract a student to do things. Social events, dances, dating, and all this kind of thing. And I had to watch that because in the veterinary school they were older there and they were serious. These kids were married. They were short on funds, the Depression years, there had been a large dropout. The senior class that graduated the year I went to Washington State had nine students in it out of the veterinary school. That's what the Depression cost those kids.

DOUGLASS: How did you finance your education? You said you sold some of the animals you had raised.

STIERN: What I did, I made an arrangement with a dairyman here to take these animals. And he took the milk production from the animals, and I took the calf production from the animals. The calves were registered purebred guernseys, and so they were more valuable than other animals at that time. My father had helped me plan out that every time there was a calf crop coming off these animals, I got the money from the sale of the registered calves and the man got the milk from the cows that produced the calves. And that was a big help to me financially getting through school.

DOUGLASS: That sounds like you did pretty well.

STIERN: It helped like everything. And then, in the summertime, I worked. I did some agricultural work, and I worked there for the street department of Bakersfield.

DOUGLASS: So by the time you finished, did you have a debt you owed on your education? Or did you get through pretty evenly?

STIERN: I came out pretty even. I was lucky. It wasn't as expensive as it is today. June and I were emptying out some things from college about two years ago, and you couldn't believe what the costs of things were. If I told you, I wouldn't expect you to believe me. At Washington State,

they would have a cluster of dormitories on a commons, and the commons would take all agricultural products they could produce. They were an agriculturally oriented school, a Morrill Act university.[1] So apples, an experimentation, went into applesauce and apple cider. The dairies and dairy research for the milk, and milk into ice cream. It all goes into this commons, and they pushed as much food through as they could. And our board bills, we both lived in dormitories--June lived in a woman's dormitory and I lived in a men's dormitory--were like $19.50 to $21.00 a month with three meals a day and two on Sunday. My dormitory cost like seventy-five dollars a semester.

DOUGLASS: Now, your wife. Where did you meet her?

STIERN: I met her at Washington State.

DOUGLASS: And she was interested in veterinary medicine?

STIERN: No. She majored in sociology.

DOUGLASS: So she was going through with her B.A.?

STIERN: Right. She was a Spokane, Washington girl, and she came down to go to Washington State, which is eighty miles away. I met her at that time.

DOUGLASS: When were you married?

STIERN: We were married in 1938.

DOUGLASS: Right after you finished?

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1. The Morrill Act (1862) provided grants of land to states to establish agricultural colleges.

STIERN: Yes. There is something I wanted to tell you right at this point. Oh. [Laughter] I hesitate telling you the next episode of this because it was very, very unusual, so really unlike me, in a way. Washington State was very provincial. As you know, it almost sets on the Idaho line. And it is in wheat country, and it is way back by itself. It is somewhat isolated. It was a very small community at that time, not too big now. But it had some very, very strict rules for its students. For a state university, they were really strict. Women had to be in their dorm by a certain hour. They could only be out so many hours a night. They could only be out so many hours on a weekend. They had to be chaperoned every time they turned around for anything that was put on. They had a dean of women and they had a dean of men who were out of--they were archaic--they were out of another era.

The dean of women would not allow the women to drink out of drinking fountains on the campus because you leaned over and too much of the seam of your hose would show below the hem of your skirt. [Laughter] We had a woman in the veterinary school who was from Los Angeles. She did everything she could to discourage that

was not a subject for women. It's a men's subject. Women do not go into this field.

And the students got irked by the fact that the deans controlled by running the student council in a way in which the formula was that the students weren't going to be speaking; it was the administration that was speaking through the selected students. And this worked up to a point where there was a lot of heat on this. And the students decided to strike on the school. It's all recorded; 1935 was the year. Something happened that never happened in schools in California at that time. What is strange about it is that the subject area is trivia compared to what Cal [University of California, Berkeley] was talking about in the sixties. Cal was talking about Dow Corporation spraying and killing people off. Big subjects that [Mario] Savio and those guys were into.

But what we were into were social mores, that we were grown up, we were not children anymore, and we didn't want to be treated like that, and people who were twenty-one years of age on campus didn't want to be treated that way. And so what we did, we formulated a thing where we wanted one representative for every 500 students who lived in dormitories, every 500

students in fraternities and sororities, and every 500 students who lived off campus. And that's what we wanted, and the school said, "No." They wouldn't do it.

Four men--and this is where I have been razzed through the years a lot about this--decided to run a strike at Washington State. We would not allow a single student to enter a classroom on this campus. And we did that for two and one-half weeks.

DOUGLASS: The beginning of your political career, I think.

STIERN: I have often wondered about that, the fairness of it, because I think representative government should be representative government.

DOUGLASS: You thought you ought to do something.

STIERN: We were really radical. And I was in the most vulnerable position. Because you don't need an out-of-state student doing that on your campus. And there were four men that were involved. I represented men's dorms, another man represented the Greek houses, another fellow represented the off-campus students, and there was a fourth person. It is fun to look back on it now because we looked like rabble-rousers. We organized that campus through the presidents of every unit organization and moved in on the president's home en masse--I've got photographs of doing this--and said, "This is what we want."

We had a list of demands. He was overwhelmed. He was an older man. You could imagine what--I have often thought since, in my later years--what the Olympia legislature thought of a president that couldn't run that state college over there and let the inmates take the place over.

And parents got upset about it. The "Richfield Reporter" reported it. "Washington State is still closed down." We took all the grey "W" lettermen, who were the athletes, like the block "C" at Cal (I am sure Claremont is not in athletics as heavily), but all the block "W" men, the football players, the basketball players, they had paddles, and we put them on every door of every building on the campus.

DOUGLASS: So was this two and a half weeks you said you did this?

STIERN: Two and a half weeks.

DOUGLASS: And what happened?

STIERN: The faculty went into the building. No students went into the building. They were going to get paddled if they did. They stayed out.

DOUGLASS: So after two and a half weeks did the president succumb?

STIERN: At the end of the two and a half weeks, they backed off. They got a new dean of men, and a new dean of women. There is an irony to this

in the names of the women. The old dean of women was a woman named Anne Fertig, and the new dean of women that came was Lulu Holmes. And so the band that we used to drum up our rallies on a flatbed truck went around singing "Annie doesn't live here anymore. And Lulu is back in town." Laughter] It was a light thing and from that took off.

But this meant papers and handbills printed out of town with printers that you didn't know, that the university couldn't catch up with who did it, and all that kind of thing.

What I am leading up to is this. Last year, I was the commencement speaker at Washington State. The newspaper in Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, and even Lewiston, Idaho, carried articles which said, "Student Activist of 1935 to be Commencement Speaker." [Laughter]

And where are the four boys who did all this skulduggery? One of them is a boy who was named Jerry Sage. Jerry Sage went on to become a college professor, and he was at the University of Alabama. But he is the man that in World War II performed The Great Escape, as depicted in the book and the motion picture by the same name, the guy who kept doing all the underground tunneling. That was Jerry Sage,

Colonel Sage of the United States Infantry was one of these four boys and had a career of teaching at University of Alabama as a result of that. He was a high school classmate of June's out of Spokane. The second one is the top chest surgeon in Salt Lake City today. The third one is in the largest law firm in Seattle as an attorney. And I'm the fourth one, who had a veterinary career and then did twenty-eight years in the California State Legislature. [Laughter] The way it worked out is strange. I only tell you the story because it was a kind of unique college experience to go through.

Veterinary Practice in Bakersfield

DOUGLASS: Yes. Had you already decided you were going to go back to Bakersfield and set yourself up in practice?

STIERN: Yes. I did.

DOUGLASS: And had you scouted that out by the end of your senior year up there?

STIERN: Yes, I did. When I was ready to graduate, jobs were hard to find as a veterinarian. And I was willing to go to work for another veterinarian. But I was offered $150 a month by two veterinarians in the state of Washington and $160 a month by one in Oregon. And I couldn't see that. And my father said, "Why don't you just come home. We'll work up something down

here. And you can start over in East Bakersfield here, on this side of town. And I'll help." So we converted a double garage with a pump house into a small office, modernized. And I worked out of probably the smallest office in the state of California for the first few years of my practice before we got going.

So I came home and started practice. Then the practice was growing. So I just said to June, "If we want to get married, we had better do it now." So I left to get married, and I brought her back from Spokane. Incidentally, she fought me all the way during the strike. She was on the other side. [Laughter] She was the president of her woman's dorm, a dorm that had 280 women in it. And she just was sympathetic to housemothers and administrators and deans of women, and she said, "I won't do it." And she stepped aside, and the vice president handled the women in her dorm because she thought I was out of line.

DOUGLASS: You were really a radical.

STIERN: Yes. That was a very radical thing to do, it was.

World War II: Military Veterinarian

DOUGLASS: All right. Then very soon World War II broke out. When did you go into service?

STIERN: I could see myself in trouble because [Adolf] Hitler was on the move when I graduated. He had already gone into Danzig and into Czechoslovakia. We had a German in our class who was as Nazi as they came.

DOUGLASS: At Pullman?

STIERN: At Pullman. His name was Werner Pundt, and he was troublesome. Everything was pro-German with him. Oh, I forgot to tell you. When you graduated from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State, even though you had done two years ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps], you were commissioned as a first lieutenant. Just like a medical officer would be a first lieutenant in the medical school. Dental, the same thing. So that what to do with him was a question because he had come to this country and taken out some papers to start becoming an American citizen. What was interesting, they commissioned him just like all the rest of us, and then they put him in a place where they could watch him to see who his contacts were, I learned later.

But I came home, and I could see this thing brewing. You know, Americans were going to Canada, and they were training to fly and all that kind of thing. And I had a reserve

commission, and I knew I was going to be called in. And so I was. I entered military service. Pearl Harbor was December the 7th of '41, and the first two weeks of January I was called in as a reserve officer. I reported to Minter Field here and then went to Fort George Wright in Spokane, Washington.

So then I had a career there as a military veterinarian. Which was interesting. I will never regret it. I did at the moment. I could see it tearing my start-up practice to pieces. But what I learned from [that] and what veterinarians did in World War II was invaluable to both my practice and my legislative career. Most people think of veterinarians being connected with the cavalry or the field artillery with horses and that kind of thing. But veterinarians were in charge of all the food supply of animal source. Packing houses, dairies, creameries, ice cream, cheese, eggs, poultry, anything that came from this source. And shipping overseas, even to other countries, like Murmansk, Russia; reverse lend-lease to Allied countries and those programs. And I was into that. And I was assigned, of all things, to the United States Army Air Corps.

So that made it strange because air was part of army at that time. There was no air

force. So, you know, you go through all that kind of thing, reporting for duty to the commanding officer of the air corps station, and my commanding officer would be the surgeon in the medical division. And walking in and reporting, "First Lieutenant Walter Stiern, Veterinary Corps, reporting as directed, sir," to a major, who says, "What the hell do I need with a veterinarian on an air base?" Well, you know, the Veterinary Corps said, "We have to educate these people. They don't realize that all the food that was going to navy and marine corps and army was going through inspections by veterinarians and satisfying quartermaster marketing orders, all that kind of thing." And that's what I did in the Second Air Force in the military until I was ordered overseas.

And I was ordered overseas by a colonel who thought he was doing me a favor.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

STIERN: The colonel I served under in the Second Air Force was headquartered at Spokane, Washington first, and then in Denver, secondly. The Second Air Force was a bomber training unit in the army. There was a First, Second, and Third and Fourth Air Force in the United States. And then

all the other air forces were overseas air forces. And the Second Air Force was a training command for learning to fly B17s and B24s, bombing, and flying in formation and like that. And they were scattered everywhere, from Spokane to Dyersburg, Tennessee to Des Moines, Iowa to Almagordo, New Mexico, to Pyote, Texas, to Ardmore, Oklahoma.

DOUGLASS: So he thought he was doing you a favor to send you overseas?

STIERN: Well, under him, he had something like sixty-five veterinarians at these different stations. And he chose me [as] one of four captains he wanted to take with him when he joined General Liston LeMay ("Ironpants LeMay"), who was to command four squadrons of B29's in New Guinea, Saipan, Tinian, and India. So he needed four veterinarians to go with him. He could see himself going from colonel to brigadier general. So he came and asked me, and what do you do when your commanding officer says, "Stiern, how would like to go to overseas with me?" Well, you go. That's all. You don't say, "I'd rather not go." I don't know what's in that Orient for me. But he said, "We are going to have four wings in Tinian, Saipan, New Guinea, and India. And I want you to be my man in India. I will be under the surgeon of that whole operation."

DOUGLASS: When would that have been?

STIERN: That was in early '45. And he said, "There will be a head dentist, there will be a head veterinarian, there will be a head surgeon. The surgeon will be in charge. I am a colonel. I have a chance to become a brigadier general out of this. I am picking four of my men." Out of the sixty-five that he had at all these different stations in the Second Air Force. "There is a chance for you to become a major in this." Rank is hard to get in the Veterinary Corps because it's a small corps, and I was a captain at that time. He said, "I can make majors out of four men. I'd like you to go to India." So, you know, I said to him what I had to say to him, "I'm happy to go be with you. I feel honored that you selected me to go."

Well, that meant overseas. So I went overseas to Calcutta. I went by ship, strangely enough, where the other three veterinarians were flown. A strange thing happened at that time in World War II, the whole war focus shifted to Japan. And flying B24s and B17s, or even the B29s at that time from India was too long a run to Japan. And so they moved in closer, and they took their element out of India to New Guinea while I was en route to India.

So when I get to India, I got to a place called Camp Kamchapura, which is out of Calcutta about five miles. It's a holding area. And I sit there on my pants for three months while they decide what they are going to do with me. They've got this air corps veterinarian sitting in Calcutta, the squadron has left and is in New Guinea and has picked up another veterinarian to be their vacancy. And so there I am, kind of in limbo. And so I am reassigned to ground troops, and, as such, I replaced a veterinarian who has been overseas for thirty-seven months. He had a child at home who was two and a half or three years old that he had never seen. He was a New York man. He was never so happy as to see me to come in to relieve him.

And I was assigned to a very, very strange organization and had in it an experience that nobody has ever had in the history of the world. And nobody will ever have in the history of the world in the future. I think every boy dreams of being able to do something that no one has ever done before and maybe will ever do again. And I had that experience. I'll tell it to you rather briefly. I don't want to go in great detail into it.

I was assigned to an organization which was called the Second Veterinary Company (Separate).

That's an unusual title in the military term. Separate had parenthesis around it. Second Veterinary Company (Separate). There was also a First Veterinary Company (Separate), and both of these organizations were made up of mules and men who handled mules. They were a support outfit to supply ammunition for Colonel [ ] Merrill's Marauders. Merrill's Marauders was an outfit well known on the Burma and India border, fighting the Japanese. It was a rugged outfit. The problem was they were jungle fighting, and you couldn't get supplies to them from the air because you couldn't see where they were. With airdrops too much was lost. And so this country had mules in India, and I was assigned to head up this group up. First Veterinary Company (Separate) were white men with white officers. Second Veterinary Company (Separate) were black men with three white officers. I was the captain with two lieutenants.

These black men had been handpicked out of the South because of their ability to handle a mule. They were sharecroppers, and they knew how to handle mules. And they did. There were 156 black soldiers and three officers in this outfit, and we handled the supply needs, the logistic needs of Merrill's Marauders.

[Senator Stiern has deleted material and rephrased it for clarification, as well as adding specific details, in parts of the following description of his service in the China-Burma-India Theater.]

When the war came to a close, the tremendous problem was how do you get all these military people out of the China-Burma-India Theater. And there were three staging areas. One out of Calcutta, an intermediate stage at Chafua, and then an advanced stage at Lido for China and Burma. I hadn't been there very long (close to two years), and so I knew I was going to be among the last to leave.

I get an order one day, after the war had ceased, and this is what the order said, "Without delay you will deliver to Chiang Kai-Shek's troops in China at a place called Pei Chi, China, the 1,554 mules that you have, by air." These had been shipped across by freighters. That's how they got them over there in the first place. And I said to myself, "By air! What happens to a mule going over the Himalayas at 31,000-32,000 feet. Nobody has ever done that before." And I was intrigued by the idea because I was to turn them over to Chiang Kai-Shek troops in Pei Chi. So we did this. This is a matter of U.S. military

history. It's recorded in Washington, D. C., what happened to these mules.

We placed these mules in cargo airplanes (converted B17s and B24s), crosswise in the airplane with bamboo poles between them. In the fuselage of the airplane I placed an enlisted man with a sidearm in front and an enlisted man with a sidearm in back. I didn't know what would happen. If they got oxygen short, would they kick the skin off the airplane? See, these were nonpressured airplanes in those days. So we took feedbags and put walk-around oxygen tanks on the end of the feedbags in case they needed oxygen. And we started out with our first planeload. Well, it is not any fun going across the Himalayas in an airplane. There is no place to land and if you go down, you go down in a rugged area. There is no place to go, except down. In the flight corridor from India to China you could see where airplanes had fallen and burned during the war years.

I was very surprised at what happened. The mules became very cyanotic. The mucous membranes of their eyes, their lips, their nostrils became blue as we ascended. But they remained standing. Mules, like horses, can lock their knees and sleep without lying down. We

were watching them very closely, and when we got to our peak of our elevation, they were still standing and they still were calm. In fact, they were like they were narcosed, like they'd had a big shot of narcotics. We didn't use the oxygen; we didn't have to. And when we started to descend on the other side, they woke up and acted like they did normally. And so then we took them off in Pei Chi.

DOUGLASS: How many hours was that trip?

STIERN: Oh, this took three to four hours to go across there, and the time to turn all these animals over to Chiang Kai-shek's troops in Pei Chi. I want to tell you that I had some flash thoughts in those days of Hannibal and his elephants going across. . . . The challenge of getting elephants into Europe. And I was intrigued by that because I too was facing a very special problem. What shocked me out of my shoes was what the Chinese did with the mules. Do you know what they did with them?

DOUGLASS: I have no idea.

STIERN: They ate them!

DOUGLASS: Is that right. After this whole process.

STIERN: But there was no point to leave them there because they were of no value to anybody in India. They didn't know how to handle the mules. They weren't worth bringing back. It

was too costly and expensive to do that. But it was an unusual experience, and nobody had ever done that before.

DOUGLASS: You had been ordered to take the mules over there with the army knowing that they wanted them for food?

STIERN: No. We didn't know what they would do with them. They wanted the mules.

DOUGLASS: They simply wanted the mules, and we were accommodating.

STIERN: And we were accommodating because it cost too much to bring them back and ship space was for for returning military personnel. So the mules were all through. Now the other unit, the First Veterinary Company (Separate) did the same thing, only they were in another part, on the India-Burma border.

After that, then I was assigned to food supplies for Allied troops in that sector. And that was an experience too; because of religious customs in India you can only slaughter cows under certain circumstances. You couldn't buy pork from Muslims, and you couldn't buy animals of any kind from Hindus, unless they were aged animals. We purchased poultry and we slaughtered a lot of animals. The idea was to take the load off the United States and subsist on the local economy the best you could. And so

we were doing that for not only American troops, but British, French, and Chinese, and other allies.

DOUGLASS: At this point, were you assigned to the. . . . You said went from the air force, in a sense, to being assigned to the infantry.

STIERN: I was assigned to the ground forces at that time. And then the problem was ships would arrive. We had two kind of ships coming into Calcutta to take the troops home. One was the "General" ships, which were made by the Kaiser Corporation at that time. They would take about 5,500 men per ship. And then we had a group of ships of another type which were called "Marine," like Marine Robin, et cetera. And those all had to be supplied with ship food stores for the trip back to the states. They were taking the great circle route, which meant they would go from Calcutta between the Straits of Makassa and then head straight to Seattle. That was the closest point of the United States. So I was supplying meat, milk, cheese, eggs, et cetera for the 5,500 personnel for their trip from India to Seattle, about a three- to four-week trip.

So I came out of India late in '46. I was over there almost two years, just about two years altogether.

DOUGLASS: Late in '46?

STIERN: Yes. Like August or September of '46. The war was well over by then. But I wasn't eligible to travel earlier because of my low number.

DOUGLASS: Was the mule run done like in the fall of 1945?

STIERN: Yes. It was done just after the war was over. There was some question of moving people from the China-Burma-India Theater into the European theater at that time. But that never culminated into anything. Those people had been over there a long, long time.

You know, the CBI [China-Burma-India] Theater is getting a lot of newsprint lately because a lot more was done than people realized, and it was kind of remote, mysterious, and also with some of the present intrigues of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. There were some of those same things going on at that time. I'm getting publications as a member of the CBI, we have an organization in this country. There are authors that are doing a lot of work on what was happening in those years.

Now, as I look back on my life, there is no place I would rather have gone than India. India has always intrigued me. I loved India. I enjoyed it. If I had not been married, I may have stayed there. And the reason was that the needs in India were so great compared to in this

country. I was very active in Assam and Bengal and the area that now is Bangledish; that's the area that I was mostly in. But veterinarians and physicians were in India. And in Assam, India, (which is a remote area) maybe there were two trained nurses in the whole province at that time. And I had people offering me jobs to go to work as a veterinarian, particularly from churches who wanted, in their missionary work, to develop better cattle, better-producing cattle, higher production from chickens, and this and this kind of thing. I had a lot of pull on me to stay there. But the area I was in is not a place to take an American woman to live in, and I came home.

When I came home to Bakersfield, I did some very interesting things. India made an impression on me that has never left my mind and heart. I tell you this as I would tell my very closest friend. There is something about India that ties me up. [stated with emotion] And I could very easily go back there and spend the rest of my life there. They are wonderful, wonderful people, and they are extremely poor. We don't have real poverty in this country. You see it in countries like India and Burma, and in Mexico and you can see it. You see real poverty.

So when you are sitting on a legislative committee in Sacramento when people are talking about the poverty level of the United States, I know what real poverty is. I have had people die in front of me from starvation that were too far gone to bring them back. I've seen women bring their dead children to the "burning ghat" early in the morning. I was in a province where I performed as a physician, in Assam. I had trunk after trunk after trunk of medical supplies for the mules, and I kept getting more and more requests to do things for people. There were no doctors there. So I went down to see the British authorities, because we did not wish to upset delicate relations of the British and their problems. They had plenty of problems there with the Indian freedom movement.

I went down, and I talked to the British medical authorities in that province. I said, "I am not a physician. I am a veterinarian. But there are a lot of things I can do to help people where there is no public medical service. Fungus diseases, I recognize. I can treat fungus in humans, the same as you would in animals. I have set broken bones a few times. I have delivered four babies in my time. And they were all in Assam." "But", I said, "I feel uncomfortable about it. I am a veterinarian,

and I know this is in the field of human medicine. I am not interested in getting the American Medical Service of the army at loggerheads with the British." And these men said, "My God, Captain, anything you can do up there, do it."

So I did a lot of public health kind of things, teaching people. I got ahold of a projector and a generator and showed motion pictures on public health in villages and a lot of that kind of thing while I was waiting to return home, which I felt was helpful to people and was of a public health mode. Then, of course, came the time when I left myself.

DOUGLASS: So when you got back to Bakersfield, what was the effect of this?

STIERN: When I came back to Bakersfield, I was saturated with this country and its people and the struggle. I witnessed the whole thing on the British freedom movement--the parades in the streets, the demonstrations. In fact, I even participated in a few places, which I should never had done. In remote back areas. But I was always working by myself. And I was always in a position where there could easily be a demonstration of a thousand people I had to go through with my jeep because a veterinarian is always working out by himself, buying things,

working with contractors in remote areas. I carried an Indian freedom flag, and I still have one. It's a rare flag made by the Indians themselves, and it was illegal to have by British law. And I had it, and I would show it on occasion to indicate where my sympathies were so I could get through a village demonstration.

Anyway, what I am getting at. When I came home, there wasn't a single East Indian in this county, not one, not a single East Indian. I got involved in the AAUN, the American Association of the United Nations. I came in through the L.A. [Los Angeles] chapter and started a chapter up here in this county and built the chapter up. We spoke for the benefit for these different countries at that time. We spoke for the benefit of nations uniting for the good of all nations. Of course, I was full of India. I would make comparisons of India with Mexico. They are very similar in many, many ways.

And then that got me into an international mold, hosting people who would come to the Bakersfield community from Paraguay or Brazil or Ceylon or wherever. And people would say, "Well, have you met the Stierns?" They maybe came here to see irrigation and farming and things, and they would stay overnight at our house. So began my international involvement.

And, of course, you know, some people think the United Nations is a radical organization. In this community, there are those elements.

When I was in Calcutta, I met a family that I became very close to. The woman in the family was a teacher at a college in Calcutta called Women's Christian College. Women's Christian College is a junior college-type school that takes women students of all faiths. They had a woman who was retired, whose name was Stella Bose, and she was the principal of the school. I did everything I could, before I left, to place surplus army material into that school, hundreds of books and paperbacks that had been shipped to troops that were going to be destroyed. And I remember--I'll never forget it as long as I live--this woman. Because she said to me, she said, "Walter," (she was up in years, she was a retired person acting as president of this school, no salary really). She said, "When you get back to America,"--I get kind of emotional about this because it did slant my life a lot--she said, "tell your people about my people. Don't talk about tigers, tiger hunting, and ebony wood and the fact that men dress in dhotis and we look different. But tell them that our feeling of freedom is the same as yours. We want our women to advance, and that

mothers want their daughters to marry well. Men want their sons to do well. We don't like being in the situation we are in. The freedom thing is very large here. Tell them about my people." And I came home very committed to that. So I used to go around to Delano, McFarland, and Ridgecrest and Arvin, Tulare as a speaker on India and the culture of India and compare it with Mexico.

DOUGLASS: How was that received?

STIERN: Quite well. Because of who I was. Who was I? I was a practising veterinarian in Bakersfield, whose father was Walter Stiern, the teacher, and who had three brothers who were active in things. And there were a few key people that didn't like it at all.

I often spoke of the ways India was ahead of us. As odd as that is. In India, there were more women in public office than there were in this country, percentwise. In India, they had forced vaccination of children in the city of Calcutta, where they went from door to door to see that children were vaccinated against the three major children's diseases in that country. Not so in this country. We don't do that. In India milk is delivered door-to-door with a cow being milked right at the door so that the people really got fresh milk. Whereas we store,

pasteurize, and condense our milk. I was showing the comparisons to illustrate what the Indian people were trying to do in their fight for freedom and a better way of life. And I had a connection with the University of Calcutta Tropical Disease School, with a doctor whose name was [ ] Dahrmindra. I did a little bit of research while I was there on tuberculosis, which is very, very prevalent in India. You know, the cattle are riddled with this disease. I got to know the university people there, and I can't tell you how much of an impression it has made on me.

II. ELECTION TO STATE SENATE

Decision to Run for State Senate

Coming home from India, I kept saying to myself, "God, I would hate to have the United States ever be in a situation like this. There are three things that are terrible: ignorance, poverty, and disease. And what can I do with the rest of my life to make things as strong as possible in the United States or in California." [with emotion] And I said to myself, "I can't do it in Bakersfield as a veterinarian." There are veterinarians that can do what I am doing in Bakersfield, and more veterinarians came in here after the war was over. The senator from Kern

County was a man named Jess R. Dorsey. He was eighty-two years old. He was senile, and he decided he wanted to run again for another four years. Even the Republican Central Committee in Kern County didn't want him to do that. But he insisted on it. And so they got somebody to run against him out of their own central committee.

I decided that if I was going to help keep ignorance, poverty and disease out of California, I must seek public office at the state or national level. "Either you have to go to congress or you have to go to Sacramento," I said to myself. At the time that I made the decision to run, it was a culmination of my Indian experience and my desire to provide the very best life experience for Californians. I decided eventually you'd have to get one of those seats in Sacramento to do anything. You can't do it as a veterinarian sitting in Bakersfield in Kern County. And I said to myself, "I've done all in veterinary medicine that I can do. I've done cesareans on dairy cattle a thousand times over. I've done all kinds of disease control. I've done all kinds of things in communicable medicine to humans from animals. And the time has come. I've spent a lot of time with animals, and now I want to do something for people."

So I decided I would like to take a run at the California State Senate seat. I got to talking about it. I talked to June about, and I knew it was going to change our whole life around. Which it did. And I knew I had to take her into my confidence. I'll never forget what she told me. She is quite a lady, incidentally. If you get to know her, you will see. She was very active in the League of Women Voters, she was very active in the American Association of University Women.

My wife ran a television program at this time in Bakersfield that was the second rated program on three stations. It was a unique program, and she was well known all over this county. It was a panel related to children, with June as the moderator and two guest experts. It was called "PTA [Parent Teacher Association] Coffee Hour," which is a strange name for a program. All the PTAs in this county met at same time on the same day at the same hour. And they tooled themselves to this program. June was on the largest station here. They went into a subject of concern to education, and when they went off at the end of thirty minutes, the PTAs in the area then would go into their own discussion groups, whether it was at [the] Mojave or Tehachapi or Taft [meeting]. That

went on for a couple of years, and it had a high rating. Any successful campaign meant her giving this up, as well as many other changes she would have to make.

She said, "Well, Walter, if you have a tissue-paper skin and it troubles you or hurts you if people lie about you, or if people defame or degrade you or criticize you, or say things that are not true, or if the rough and tumble of politics," which we knew nothing about, "is offensive to you, don't touch it with a twenty-foot pole." "But," she says, "if those things do not hurt you and you are willing to take the brickbats, have people lie about you, criticize you, run you down, say things that you didn't do, all the kind of things which are the rough and tumble of political battles, wade right in, and I'll go along with you, honey." And that's what we did. And it was an experience. Prior to 1957, I had never held a public office in my lifetime. I had never even been on the school board; I had never been on the city council; I had never served on anything.

DOUGLASS: Was this in the spring of 1958 you did this?

STIERN: Yes. The fall of 1957 and early 1958. And one of the critical things was that during all the years that I was in my first practice, my war experience in this country and in India, and

then coming back and reestablishing my practice (my brother had gotten out of veterinary school and we had a partnership together), I had never declared a political party affilition. I was listed as "Declines to State," and I voted that way. Partly, I was angered by what I found out when I came back from Washington State. At that time, in California, if you wanted to vote. . . . Are you a native Californian?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: Well, if you are, you may remember this. When you went to register to vote, you had to tell what your party was. And then when you went to the polls, they handed you a ballot of color--a blue, a yellow, a pink, a white, an orange ballot--depending on your party affiliation. Everybody in that precinct knew what you were. Everybody who had seen you with the ballot in your hand knew what you were. And when you were all through, that wasn't enough. They hung a sheet on the outside of the voting facility that said, "Enid Douglass, Democrat, stenographer, address," or it said, "Republican, bookkeeper," et cetera. I had an uncle who lost his job because of that. His employer told him how to register and vote, and he wouldn't do it and he lost his job. I thought, "That is crazy." When I came out of college, I said, "Well, I am just

going to stay as a nonpartisan for a while." So that's why.

So I only became a Democrat about a year and a half to two years before I ran for office. So I knew I was going to have some people say, "Well, that guy is a johnny-come-lately. He has not been in this party very long like me. I've been a Democrat since my parents came from Texas."

First Campaign

It cost me $12,500 in campaign costs in 1958 to become the state senator from Kern County in Sacramento. Today I couldn't run for reelection unless I had a million dollars. That's what it costs to do it, and I think it is cruel, insane, crazy, and dumb. Any fifth-grade kid could see the faults of that. It is absolutely obscene. It has to be changed. Anyway, it cost me $12,500 for the primary and general election. And I went to Sacramento. And I was one of ten people who were sworn in at that time.

[1. Virgil O'Sullivan of Williams (Colusa, Glenn, Temaha Counties)
2. Walter W. Stiern of Bakersfield [Kern County]
3. Stanford [C.] Shaw of San Bernardino
4. Robert [D.] Williams of Hanford [Kings County]

5. Eugene McAteer of San Francisco
6. John W. Holmdahl of Oakland [Alameda County]
7. Ronald G. Cameron of Auburn [Nevada, Placer, Sierra Counties]
8. Joseph [A.] Rattigan of Santa Rosa [Sonoma County]
9. Hugo Fisher of San Diego
10. John Waverly [Waverly Jack] Slattery of McKinleyville [Lake, Mendocino Counties]

Albert S. Rodda was part of this new class of senators, but had one month's seniority, having been elected in November to finish the unexpired term of Senator [Earl D.] Desmond of Sacramento, who had died in office, as well as the new four-year term we were all elected to. The Total "new class" is actually eleven--and all men.]*

DOUGLASS: Well, now how did you do in terms of getting the Democratic party to support you? You had to win a primary against someone.

STIERN: The way I became a Democrat. A man in Bakersfield, who later became one of my dear friends, called me. He still lives in Davis;

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* Senator Stiern added the preceding bracketed material, listing the ten new assemblyman, during his review of the draft transcript.

his name is John C. Williamson. You may have heard of the Williamson Land Act, named for him.[1]

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: He called me on the telephone. And he says, "Dr. Stiern, I have learned that you are a great admirer of Adlai Stevenson." And I was. I had met the man, had dinner with him once. And I also had a breakfast once with him here in Bakersfield. I said, "Yes, I am." And he said, "I am John Williamson. I am chairman of the Democratic Central Committee in Kern County, and I would like you to run the campaign for Adlai Stevenson on the east side of the county." (Highway 99 highway split the county into two assembly districts at that time. The east side was Assemblywoman Dorothy Donahoe's district.) And I said, "Well, John, I'm not even a Democrat. I can't do that." And John said, "Well, we can change that in a hurry. You just change your registration." And I did.

Then I filled in on a vacancy on the Kern County Democratic Central Committee for part of a term, so the the central committee people learned who I was. I tried to figure if I had a shot at public office, even a possibility

1. A.B. 2117, 1965 Leg. Sess., Cal. Stat. 1443 (1965). Encourages preservation of open space and agricultural lands through tax assessment.

of winning, because I had never held office. People knew me as a veterinarian, but they didn't know me in a political life. And I can remember looking at dropping a rock on Bakersfield like it was a pail of water and watching the concentric rings going out. How many people knew Walter Stiern in Bakersfield? How many people knew Walter Stiern in a concentric circle fifteen miles out of Bakersfield? How many knew Walter Stiern fifty miles out of Bakersfield? How many knew Walter Stiern a hundred miles out of Bakersfield? And I sat down and did a lot of calculating. I was seeing about thirty veterinary clients a day. Thirty clients a day is 900 a month; 900 a month is 10,000 a year. I had been in practice about twenty years. Lot of the clients were duplications, but maybe I had a shot at it.

And so I used my files, my veterinary files, and I wrote the people. I said, "I don't know if you are a Democrat or a Republican, and it really doesn't make that much difference to me at this moment. I would like to run for the state senate. I am of Democratic persuasion. I know the County of Kern well. I know people of both parties." I did say, "I think it's time for a change," I had that in my mind because the incumbent senator was rather senile. He was a

client of mine, and I knew him. But I said, "I think I could accomplish some things, particularly in the field of education that is of special interest to me, and I would like to run."

To my surprise, a strange thing happened. If you remember, at that time the problem in politics statewide in California was the fight between Governor Goodwin [J.] Knight and the man who ran the Oakland Tribune.

DOUGLASS: [William F.] Knowland.

STIERN: Knowland. And you remember he wanted to run for governor and have "Goodie" Knight run for the U. S. Senate. In this kind of conservative, agricultural community, a strange thing happened. One thing that you used in those days, more than you do now, were quarter cards, where you had either a photo of a candidate or it said, "Elect Stiern; State Senate," or "Elect Knowland to Governor." I was noticing on the tailgates of cattle trucks and cow trailers and horse trailers that people had stapled on the back end of them, "Knowland for Governor" (the Republicans would put them there), and "Walt Stiern for State Senator." And so I had a kind of a bipartisan support. What's interesting about that was people were comparing me with the elderly Republican incumbent. I am

sure, what I won on was cattlemen's support. The majority of cattlemen are Republican in California. I could hear them say, "I know Walt. He's made money for me. He's helped me on my ranch. He has saved cattle for me. He is willing to stay and work hard. He is a good veterinarian. We have been successful with this guy. I knew his father in high school. And I am willing to support this guy." That brought me a lot of Republican support. I won't say I captured all the Republican vote, but it pulled a great deal for me. And then, as a Democrat, I pulled that support.

DOUGLASS: Who were you running against in the Democratic primary?

STIERN: I had the strangest race that I could have possibly every had. What happened was the Republicans, of course, had this man, Jess R. Dorsey, who was a longtime incumbent and in his eighties. They wanted to replace him, and groomed a young attorney, thirty-five years old, named Barney Gill, to run against him. Can you image that? A central committee not supporting the incumbent! Gill is still practicing to this day in Bakersfield. He said he is glad he lost at the primary.

I found out that a man whose name was William S. Walker, who was the state deputy

labor commissioner in this county, was going to run for the seat on the Democratic ticket. So it was Stiern and Walker, on the one side, and then it was Gill and the incumbent on the other.

We went into the primary. We came out of the primary. I had beaten Walker, and the incumbent, the old man, beat Barney Gill. So that puts me up against the old man. As I say, he was eighty-one, going on eighty-two.

DOUGLASS: Now did you cross-file?

STIERN: Yes. I did.

DOUGLASS: How did you do on the Republican ticket?

STIERN: I did pretty well.

DOUGLASS: That would be an indicator to you.

STIERN: Yes. So it's Dorsey, the elderly, longtime incumbent running against this new young man who had never been in politics in his life.

DOUGLASS: Then Walker didn't give you a very hard time?

STIERN: Let me say Walker didn't give me much of a challenge, I beat him easily. But, anyway, as the primary score came out, I beat the incumbent, but, also, Walker had more votes than the incumbent, the Republican. So the general election campaign was then Stiern versus Dorsey.

Six days before the general election, my phone rang. This man, a very personal friend, said, "Have you heard about Jess Dorsey?" And I said, "No. What about Jess Dorsey?" And he

says, "He is in the emergency hospital, and he is in bad shape." He had some kind of a duodenal hernia, ulcerous thing that was causing internal bleeding. And, so, here you've got this man in the hospital, and people are saying, "Walt, what are you going to do? What if this man dies?" I said, "Well, I don't know. It's a strange situation." What happened was that he did die, and he died seventy-two hours before the election, before people went to vote "Dorsey" or "Stiern."

Well, I got brickbats from some Republicans, you know. "Stiern didn't beat Dorsey, the undertaker beat him," and all that kind of thing. But the fact remains, my vote was large enough and even Mr. Walker's primary vote was bigger. Walker's primary support, plus my Republican and Democratic support, gave me the election, and I beat him easily.

So I went to Sacramento, and one of the first bills I carried was a bill to resolve this inequity in the law. The Republicans were forced to vote for a dead man because the law provided no alternative that close to an election.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

STIERN: It was one of the first three bills that I entered because of the obvious inequity. And it went through the legislative process real easy. I didn't have a problem with it at all. And, as it worked out, within a very short time it solved a problem in two cases in which the Republican party gained because their candidate had died. Senator John S. Erhart from San Luis Obispo was one of these who died in office.

DOUGLASS: What exactly did the bill provide?

STIERN: The bill provided that a central committee could have an emergency meeting and choose a replacement candidate for the deceased, publicize it in any way they wanted to by media, press, radio, newspapers, pencils printed with the new candidates name, et cetera, so that their party members would have a person of their persuasion to vote for at the polls. It has been a successful change in the law.

Nature of the Senate in 1959 and Later

STIERN: As a veterinarian seeking election, I had support in the veterinary profession from Republicans and Democrats alike. And the breakdown in veterinary medicine is like human medicine. Veterinarians, like physicians, are about 90 percent Republican and maybe 10 percent Democrat. [Laughter] And so I had north and south support groups in the veterinary

profession. "Let's get Walt elected and send him to Sacramento." So I came to Sacramento as the only veterinarian that had ever been up there. And this created a lot of funny things, you know. People made all kinds of comments. Can't you hear them. [Laughter] "Since it's such a circus up there, full of animals, they need a veterinarian to keep them in shape." "Since most of them up there are the back ends of horses, they need a veterinarian to keep them in shape." "Since the state has gone to the dogs, we had better have a veterinarian up there." Colorful comments like that.

So when I went to Sacramento, I went up having had no experience at all, green as grass, and I was in a lawyer's world. And I had come into a body of forty men which traditionally had been sixty, seventy, and eighty years of age. I had come in as one of ten, the youngest one being about thirty-one. I think it was Hugo Fisher from San Diego, who retired as a superior court judge a while back. The oldest one was Jack Slattery, who represented the Mendocino-Lake area. Lake County was his home area. And he was forty-nine to fifty. I was forty-four.

Hugh Burns, sitting in the podium as the [president] pro tem, a kind of exotic, unusual man, looked in shock at the young newcomers. It

was a club (they called it a club), the senate, and these ten, (they didn't call them Young Turks at that time), starry-eyed guys coming in tremendously changed the complexion of the senate. The Democrats had used the political slogan, "Sweep the State in '58," and they did. They took every office except one, which was the secretary of state. Frank Jordan was the one that prevailed. With [Edmund G.] Brown [Sr.] coming in as the governor (following a Republican governor) and this infusion of ten Democrats in the senate, the Democratic party prevailed. At that time, there were no such things as Democrat caucuses, Republican caucuses, and Democrat leadership, and Republican leadership. There was none of that. And, to be honest with you, I think the senate was better without it.

You had people who were making decisions on the basis of principle. And I previously alluded to a time when Senator Murdy, John [A.] Murdy [Jr.], advised me. I'll give you an example to illustrate that here. Early in my career, something came up that had to do with the formulas on water and water law here in California. And I didn't know the genesis of this because I hadn't been there for factfinding committees hearings. While the debate was on, I

got up out of my seat, and I went over to John Murdy, who I trusted. I said, "John, you have been here longer than I have. I don't know anything about this bill at all. And I am really somewhat in a mystery as to how to vote on it. What is right, and what is wrong?" Here I am, in the senate, you know, for only forty-four or forty-five days.

And John said to me, "Walter, you are from Kern County. You should vote 'no' on this bill. I am from Orange County. I must vote 'yes' on this bill. It is to satisfy the needs of my district. But you vote 'no' on this bill, and you won't get injured or caught at all." I came back to my seat, and I did vote "no." I thought, "Gee, this guy is really a straight-arrow guy." He really was, you know. Here he was, a Republican, and I'm a Democrat. He was from big, massive, growing Orange County. I was from a rural, provincial county of Kern. We were on opposite sides of the mountains. It was totally different. And yet he was straight with me. That was the kind of man he was.

But that's the kind of a senate it was. If there was a caucus in the senate, it was the senate as a whole that walked out of the senate chamber into a caucus room and aired their differences there and came back out into the

public and moved on as to what they were doing. It's not what is done today. Today it's dog fight dog, cat fight cat. One seat means everything. If it takes $2 million out-of-state money to win a seat to make the edge greater for one party, let's do it. In those days, no colleague ever went into another man's district to hurt him, or talk, or give a dollar, or give up a signboard or say anything at all against the incumbent. Never!

One of the best friends I ever made in the legislature was Stephen [P.] Teale, who was a close friend of Kern County's Assemblywoman Dorothy Donahoe. During my first campaign, she says, "You've got to learn to know this man. He is a physician and you will enjoy him." And I went to see him. The first time I went to Sacramento, I went up to look at that operation and said to myself, from the gallery, "Do you want to be part of that operation or not?" You had to get a ticket to get in the room, and I went to get a ticket from Teale so I could get into the senate gallery. He was being respectful to Jess Dorsey, the Republican senator in Kern County. And he gives me the tickets, and he says, "Walt Stiern, here is a ticket to go into the senate chamber. That's all I am doing for you." He was a Democrat, but

you don't walk into another man's county regardless. You didn't do that in those days.

But now, today, for instance, Senator Bill Richardson with the gun control thing will put thousands of dollars into a county race. He will go and convince the Bank of America to give their billboards to some Republican who is running for Congress, or he'll put its boards against me. They'll come down to the airport if the cause is for the Republican Party and hold a press conference for my opponent in a campaign. There are all of these kind of things that go on today. It's highly politicized compared to then.

But here is Hugh Burns, standing in front, looking--he has lost ten of his men, his old cronies. He has ten of these new guys in there. How do you work with these people? What are they going to do? How is it going to work? And it worked really well. It homogenized together in such a way that it seemed to work very well.

The fact that you chose '66 is interesting to me, because I don't know what basis you did that on, when you said '59 to '66 [dividing the interview sessions], but that was the year of reapportionment, and that's a very important year. To me, the senate has never been the same since.

DOUGLASS: That was the critical year.

STIERN: Yes. There is a reason for this. The idea of reapportionment had appeared on several occasions on the ballot in California. Shall we reapportion the senate on the basis of population, like the assembly? Or shall we leave it where each senator represents not less than one county, not more than three? Which made some strange configurations. Richard Richards' being from Los Angeles with 7.5 million people; Charles Brown being from Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties with 45,000 people and having the same weight in the state senate. The senate would go along with that, but from behind the scenes, they would fight it. The power structure would get money from different power structures to fight that, to knock it down, so the senate would stay as it was. They liked it as it was. The other side was saying, "You are representing rocks, trees, and forests, and not people. As long as you keep this up, you've got to change it."

When you go from Senate District 1 to Senate District 40 (from the Oregon line to the Mexican line, and my district number was 34 when I went in), thirty-four senate seats were north of the Tehachapis, and six seats were south of the Tehachapis. For more than half the

population of the state, which was located south of the Tehachapis, we had six seats in the senate.

That's really wrong. But the senate liked it the way it was and wanted to keep it that way. They wanted the rural control in the north, and they excused it by saying, "Well, it gives you two houses with two different systems. The same as the U. S. Senate is different from the House of Representatives." And they sold the people on that. The people voted for it and went along. And the senate key people smiled. They liked the idea.

All of a sudden came the U. S. Supreme Court, looking at Kentucky and Tennessee and seeing that they hadn't reapportioned themselves for sixty and seventy years, and [it] said, "You must reapportion yourselves on population." And that's where the eggbeater went into the thing and wrecked it as far as the way it was for the senate oldtimers. We wondered what would happen. Would it be an infusion of new people from all over California coming into the senate? Of course not. It was a flooding of assembly people who came across to our house, who already had a political base where they were. They had their war chest. They had their workers. They were all set. And so the shift was that the assemblymen came to the senate and did what I

call "assemblyized" the senate, and it was never the same after that time.

DOUGLASS: Oh, good point.

STIERN: The other interesting thing that happened--I used to keep track of the academic background of the senators. When I first went to the senate, I said, "I want to learn everything I can about every man that sits in this room and as much as I can about his wife." Because I could see that that has a lot to do with where you run into problems where decisions are made in committees, on the floor, and in debate. There were very few academic degrees in the state senate in 1959. Not many; there were a few. There were extremes--like Senator James [A.] Cobey from Merced who had a degree out of Harvard, a degree out of Yale, and a degree out of Princeton. But there was Hugh Burns, who was a mortician--he had gone to mortuary school for six months in Arizona. That was all the education he had. He did well in that business in Fresno, made a lot of money and was a big investor in Sequoia Savings and Loan and was a wheeler-dealer in Fresno County.

And you had everything in between. You had people who had been foremen, superintendents of P G & E [Pacific Gas and Electric], and you had farmers. Not many degrees. Today, in the state

senate, and in the period that changed after '66, the educational background substantially increased. I think you would be hard put now to find somebody in the senate that doesn't have a collegiate degree of some kind.

I can think of one or two, and, oddly, one of those is one of the most active, successful people in the senate--Alfred [E.] Alquist, who has chaired the Finance Committee. And do you know where that man came from? He came from Tennessee, and was yard foreman for a railroad when he was elected to the senate. He handles a $36 billion budget as the chairman of the Finance Committee in the senate. Also, he was knighted by the king of Sweden.

[Pause for a break for lunch]

DOUGLASS: I wanted to ask you. Do you think that Brown's victory, or campaigning, that time had any particular effect on your campaign? In other words, did Brown have coattails? Do you think it affected you one way or another in your district here?

STIERN: I intentionally stayed off his bandwagon when he would go through town. And other Democrats got on the bus and rode with him. And, in the long run, I think it helped me, not doing that. The congressman and the assemblymen were on that

bus. And, eventually, during the course of Brown's career as governor, you saw liberal things happening that, to some degree, were too much for this county.

This (Kern) county has southern patterns imposed upon it, agriculturally-imposed patterns on it. And when you got into things that bore on racial issues, and when you go into things that involve the death penalty (Caryl Chessman case); when you got into things that had to do with bilingual education and putting money to that, and affirmative action, Brown began looking more and more liberal. So that when he got down to running at the end of his second term, he looked a little different to the fabric of Kern County than he did when he first ran.

I didn't ride the bus. And some people told me, "Walter, that is one of the reasons you survived." Because the sweepout was very heavy. I know that a congressman named [Robert J.] Lagomarsino said to me, "Walter, the reason you survived is because you didn't hang onto the coattails of Pat Brown. You looked like your own man in your own area."

DOUGLASS: So you did that not only in '59 but in the next campaign?

STIERN: Oh, yes. I didn't shy away from Brown when he came and appeared on platforms, things like

that, but when he got on caravaning around in the San Joaquin Valley, I didn't ride that bus.

President Pro Tem Hugh Burns

DOUGLASS: In terms of Hugh Burns--you are new in the senate and, of course there is the question of assigning you to committees. I was just interested in whether you got committees you were interested in and how Burns treated you, as an individual freshman.

STIERN: What they tried to do was to give you the committees that you wanted. The seniority plan held very strong at that time. Not any more. But at that time, it was in mode, in effect. And I asked for a couple--when I made my commmittee assignments request, I put down ones that I thought were best for my professional background and my knowledge of my county. So I wanted to be on Education, I wanted to be on Water Resources and Agriculture, I wanted to be Public Health, because that's where medical things were. I asked for those, and they pretty well gave me what I asked for. I didn't have any problem with that. They gave me some things I didn't ask for. I didn't ask for Veterans Affairs, and they put me on that.

DOUGLASS: That was not the first term. I think it's the next one.

STIERN: It's a minor committee, and Fish and Game was a

minor committee. He tried hard to get people into committees they requested. I think he was very fair trying to do that.

DOUGLASS: Talk a little bit about Hugh Burns.

STIERN: Hugh Burns is a very, very interesting man. And I am one of the people who think of him as probably the best pro tem we've ever had in the whole period of my twenty-eight years in the senate.

There were unusual things about him. He was a rascal when he went to Sacramento. Everybody will tell you that. He went first to the assembly as an assemblyman from Fresno County, and then he ran for the senate. Once he was in the senate, he ran into a situation where the split between Democrats and Republicans was very close, it was like 20-20. In fact, if memory serves me, I think it was twenty-one Republicans and nineteen Democrats when he made his move to try to be pro tem. [Harold J.] Butch Powers was the lieutenant governor at that time, and he was president of the senate. And he was Republican.

Hugh Burns put something together with two Republican senators that gave him the votes to make him pro tem. And one of those men was a man who came very young to the senate, and was a powerful man before he got out of there. Using

all kinds of methods, he obtained his power. He came from Siskiyou, from the north part of the state. His name was Randolph Collier, and he felt that the state had short-shrifted the north part of the state on highways, and he was going to come down to Sacramento to do something about that. So he was elected and came to Sacramento, and eventually became known as the "Father" of California's freeways. Later in his career Senator Collier switched parties and registered and ran as a Democrat.

The other Republican, whose name was [Louis G.] Sutton, who came from Tehama, Colusa, and Glenn Counties. And he felt somewhat the same way a Collier because he also represented small counties. They didn't have much money to put into highways, and Los Angeles and the southern part of the state were getting the lion's share of the money.

There is a line drawn in the state of California, which is called the Breed-Mayo line. A lot of people are not even aware of it. There are legislators who don't even know about it. And it runs over the top line of San Luis Obispo County, the bottom of Kings County, across Kern, and over to the north Inyo County line to the Nevada border. The highway construction money ratios go north and south on the basis of a

formula, and the southern part of the state gets the lion's share of the money (L. A., Orange, and San Diego). The north part of the state got the least. And, if you were way north, you got very little. San Francisco and San Jose were grabbing what they could, and Fresno and Stockton were grabbing what they could. But if you were somewhere like Dunsmuir or Weed or Siskiyou, you were short on highway construction dollars. So Senators Collier and Sutton came down bent on doing something about this.

And Senator Collier made a compact with Burns that he would vote for him to be pro tem if Burns would make him chairman of the Transportation Committee. Burns said he would. And with Sutton, it was some other chairmanship he was seeking. And so, all of a sudden, although it took two Republicans to do it, Burns won pro tem by 21-19 votes.

DOUGLASS: So that's how he became pro tem.

STIERN: That's how he became pro tem. He was such a likable person by nature, and he was a "good old boy" type. You know, he could roll with the lobbyists, and he could roll with the power structure. People would take bills to him and say, "Hugh, can you get this through for me some way?" Well, he would try.

I remember one time I was walking to lunch

with him, and he said, "I've got this crazy bill that the optometrists want. I don't know what to do with it. I've sent it to the Public Health Committee. They killed the bill. I reassigned the bill to the Business and Professions Committee. They killed the bill. My God, the next thing, I'll be sending it to Fish and Game to get it out of here." He was doing things that were not germane, and he knew every trick in the book.

DOUGLASS: He knew how to play the game.

STIERN: He knew how to play it. He carried the rules in his hip pocket. He played it close then. He always said that you don't want a lot of staff. The less staff you have, the better. The more staff you have, you are going to have one of them running against you one of these times. That does happen.

And so, when I went there, there was myself and one woman secretary. That was my office, the whole thing. That's what we had. We had a few senate consultants, but not very many. But today we have we have staffs in those offices that you can't believe. We have consultants stumbling over themselves. We have district offices, which we never had in those days. We never had district offices when I went up there.

So everything at that time was held down. It was just like Hugh Burns was trying to hold them down. You'd go in and ask for something, and he'd just smile at you. And he'd say, "Oh, John, you don't need that. I'll show you how you can get around it. You give me that, and we have can have that typed in a pool. You don't need a special machine in your office for that." He was that kind of a man.

And yet he would. . . . You know, if I wanted to be the only man to vote against his bill and he had every other vote in the senate, and I voted "no" on it (that happened on some occasions), he would say, "I understand that. I know the grape growers in Kern County feel different about grape varieties than they do in my county. That's okay. I don't want you to change. You stay the way you are. You've got to represent your people." And he was a very fair person.

DOUGLASS: It doesn't sound like he was vindictive?

STIERN: No. And he was comical. Comical, funny, turn a phrase, tell a story. This little thing that [President Ronald] Reagan does all the time. Hugh had that one-liner ability.

The guys would start arguing on something, and he would come in. I remember one I've never forgotten because it hit me so funny. I saw two

guys arguing one time. And he says, "Well, let's be calm and let's turn to Hymn No. 444 in the green book." And these guys just stopped. He just had a way about him. And people kind of trusted him. It felt easy with him.

And yet I know he wasn't above doing things that I knew were helpful to Hugh Burns in his own bailiwick. He was a big owner in Sequoia Savings and Loan in Fresno. And I knew that he worked close with the savings and loan people. But I have to admit that I liked him very much. I thought he was very fair. He would point out things where he would say, "Well, I think you are going the wrong way here, but let me give you something else to consider." And then he would suggest something different than what they were doing. And then let them decided what they thought was best.

DOUGLASS: He wasn't heavy-handed, it doesn't sound like.

STIERN: No. A lot of times he was right, he was very right.

DOUGLASS: So you felt from the beginning that you could go in and talk to him. Or that you were dealing with someone who was fair minded.

STIERN: Right. We have had a lot of pro tems since then. We've had Jack Schrade from San Diego. We've had Howard Way from Tulare. We've had [James R.] Mills from San Diego.

DOUGLASS: Mills and [David A.] Roberti.

STIERN: And Roberti. And I don't think any of these can hold a candle to Burns.

DOUGLASS: You thought he was skillful at the job?

STIERN: He was a skillful political technician. And it was just a born trait.

DOUGLASS: So do you think he would have been good even in today's environment?

STIERN: No. I think he would have a terrible time today. You see, he was working. . . . When I went up, it was a part-time legislature. And he would have liked to have kept it that way. He thought that was enough. "If we can't get everything done in four months here and get the hell out of here and go home, then we're not doing a very good job," he'd say. "People don't need to support the legislature all year around. What are you trying to do, make a career out of this thing? This is supposed to be a part-time thing." That was his philosophy. Well, there were a lot of people in the senate who felt the same way.

Of course, as things changed, and there were reasons for them to, I'd say, "Well, you know, Hugh, there are a lot of new things coming up that weren't there when you came to the senate. You know, we are talking about things

like air pollution and water pollution, noise pollution, a state college university system, and a state water system. Things that were not even in contention when you came up here." And for many years California was growing so fast. When I first went up there, the budget was, I think, $5.7 billion, somewhere in that range. (I would want to check that before I quote it.) And today it is up around $36-37 billion. And Hugh Burns would have gone out of his mind if he had seen a budget that said $8-9 billion.

And yet the state had this greatly increased immigration coming to the state from other states and countries, and we had a heavy population of children coming along. These came from two sources: the postwar children growing up, and people coming from other states and nations who had children in their family. And you have to prepare schools and desks and teachers for children. That's what forced the issue in the Master Plan for Higher Education--of doing as good a job as you could do.

DOUGLASS: I've got it here. It [the budget] was $2.2 billion in '59.

STIERN: $2.2 billion. Can you imagine that? And today it's up around $36-37 billion. Well, he'd (Burns) truly tried to keep the cost of government down and to have a part-time

legislature. But it got to the point where problems would come up and the governor would have to call us back to special sessions. And if you totalled out all those special session costs, you were just as well off having the legislature go a little longer in the year than a part-time legislature. And so that's what we did. We proposed the change adopted by the electorate.

We had fact-finding committees in those days, and the reason we had them is because if we didn't have time during a quick session to study some real problems, then we would do it with fact-finding committees in the interim. So when we extended it to a longer--what we called and all-year-around--session, some of these fact-finding committees became standing committees. And it was a natural transition to do that.

Part-Time Legislator and Veterinarian

DOUGLASS: Well, what was your plan when you were elected about how you would handle this being a part-time legislator? In other words, you were going to keep your veterinary practice?

STIERN: Practice, and I did.

DOUGLASS: And you did both.

STIERN: That's right. At a certain time, we went

through a routine. By this time, I had three partners, and they all three were Republicans. [Laughter] My brother, who was a wheelhorse Republican in the community, and the other two men, who were both Republicans. And they had a lot of fun kidding me about things. And so they went through a routine in our hospital. The first day I would come back at the end of the short session. Was what? Like April?

DOUGLASS: The end of March and then June.

STIERN: I'd come back, and I would be a veterinarian-senator for the rest of the year. They would line up, military style, and they would get the staff members to do the same thing. And I ran a gauntlet when I went in my veterinary hospital. They were all in their white jackets, and when I came in, they would toss my white apron to me that I was going wear as I saw patients and owners, and they said, "Well, you are not at the public trough any longer, senator. You are going to go back to private enterprise here and make a living. So take that senatorial cloak off and get back to work. And, incidentally, the three people here want you to see some stallions in the country, and this, and that." They had a lot of fun with it. And so then I would perform as a veterinarian, but I would talk at different

meetings as a senator.

DOUGLASS: So you could mix the two?

STIERN: Yes. And I could go to meetings of different groups. And I did. The lawyer-senators all went back into their practices. There were a number of wealthy people in the senate at that time, who hired people to help run their ranches and do different things.

Reapportionment of the Senate

That went on until the concept of a full-time senate took place. That was the first change. And then the second change was the reapportionment. Like I said, if you represented one county like Richard Richards did with 7.5 million people, you had one tremendous load. You had to carry all of your thirty-one Los Angeles assemblymen's bills on the senate floor, plus your own. There never was man who worked harder than he did.

There was never a man who worked less than Senator [Charles] Brown from Inyo-Mono-Alpine counties with a low population. You know, he would sit around in the hallways, cleaning his finger nails with nothing to do at times when carts were wheeling packets of one hundred pound bails out to the mailroom for Richard Richards just for Los Angeles. It was inconceivable that you would have that kind of a variation, and

that so many people had so unequal representation.

It was fine. Kern had Senator Stiern, Fresno had Senator Burns, Tulare had Senator [J. Howard] Williams, and Merced and Madera counties had Senator Cobey, and Hugo Fisher was the senator from San Diego County.

But, in all honesty, you could not say that was fair. I never thought about it until I found a good way to explain it to people. And I loved to explain in it the senate chamber, when they were not in session. I would take the people down into the senate chamber. Have you ever been in the senate chamber?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: I said, "Now take a look." I would go up and stand in the front of the aisle that splits the house. I would say, "I want you to look at this room. Nobody is sitting here. But all these seats on this side of the aisle, all twenty of them, are northern seats, and on the other side of the aisle, all but those six over there by themselves are northern seats. The six by themselves over there represent everything south of the Tehachapis. Now when you are at Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego, the beach cities, San Bernardino, Riverside and all of that with a population of over 50 percent of the

state's total, and have only six senators to represent the area south of the Tehachapi Mountains, is this conceivably fair? Of course, it's not." And that wasn't a very popular way to talk in the senate at that time.

It was true. The assembly was on the basis of population and the senate was on regions. So what happened in '66, the [United States] Supreme Court said, "All states will reapportion themselves on the basis of population. And that's the way it will be." Forget this stuff. Not less than one county, not more than three [per senator], like you have in California. So that went down the tubes and was the end of that.

From that point on, it was: divide the senate into forty proportionate seats, give or take a percent one way or the other, but come as close as you can to it. Now come the strange configurations. In the county of San Francisco, you are going to have two senators in a square miles (I forget what it is--forty-seven square miles, something like that), and Walt Stiern with 33,000 square miles in four counties. But that was the fairness of the vote on the one man, one vote base.

What happened at the time. . . . There was a time when Dymally was on the floor of the

senate, Mervyn [M.] Dymally, you have heard that name?

DOUGLASS: Yes. I know who he is.

STIERN: A senate Democrat. And a man named John [L.] Harmer, a Republican. They decided they wanted to start a Democrat and a Republican caucus, and it took hold. And from that time on, the senate has never ever, ever, ever been the same.

DOUGLASS: What era was that? Was that in the late sixties?

STIERN: Reagan was governor at the time.

DOUGLASS: All right. I think that was in the early sixties that Dymally was on a couple of committees you were on.

STIERN: It was early on in the Republican years because there were several things that go along with it.

DOUGLASS: Here. Dymally was on the Education Committee in '67. So that was it.

STIERN: Let's see. Reagan became governor in 19. . . ?

DOUGLASS: Was elected in '66.

STIERN: Reagan was elected governor in '66?

DOUGLASS: Yes. And he was inaugurated in January of '67.

STIERN: All right. Now what happened. . . . Maybe I should touch on this because it's, I think, very instrumental in this.

When reapportionment came, we made a reapportionment plan that was to prevail for the 1970s. A plan was devised by senate and the

assembly and passed by both the senate and assembly, with approval of the Republican member of the senate who served on the Reapportionment Committee. That was John Harmer. John Harmer was from Glendale, and John Harmer eventually became lieutenant governor for a very short period of time. You remember when Reagan came in, [Robert H.] Finch was the lieutenant governor.

So Dymally and John Harmer worked up this plan for reapportionment. They thought it was fair. They presented it to both houses. The members of both houses of the Republican Party thought it was a fair plan. When it got to Reagan's desk, he absolutely refused to sign it. "I will not sign. This is unfair to Republicans. It is detrimental to Republicans. The Democrats are taking advantage of us. And I will not sign this plan." And John Harmer, who is a very, very intelligent guy and a lawyer, said, "I totally disagree with you. I think it's basically as fair as we could have at this time."

Well, you probably know what happens when that happens. When you have a stalemate and the governor turns this over to what is called, I think it is called a board of "masters" to make a reapportionment plan.

DOUGLASS: Oh, a council [a master's plan].

STIERN: There are three people that head this up. And they were mainly UC [University of California] people, with strong UC influence on this. And they came up with a plan. The plan was a disaster. The reason it was a disaster was because you had strange things happen. Kings County, which was just north of me, which I had represented, had no state senator at all. Inyo County had two state senators, a man from Tulare and myself. It got into all kinds of entanglements, and there were a lot of problems. John Harmer was heartsick because he felt that they had done a good job working out a plan, and Reagan wouldn't go along. Reagan was still in that touchy stage, you know, of not wanting to be taken advantage of by the status quo, "I am a citizen-governor and want to get my own way," and this kind of thing."

DOUGLASS: But the report of that council [the master's report] was eventually what would be turned over to the court, wasn't it?

STIERN: That's right. And that's where the change took place.

"Assemblyization" of the Senate

DOUGLASS: And, at the same, then in '67, you say Dymally and Harmer really got into the caucusing idea?

STIERN: You see, the way money is spent in the

legislature--this is another thing that I dislike, another one of those flaws that ought to be straightened out. There is a contingency fund put in the budget for the operation of the senate and for the assembly. It is basically equal, except that the one house is eighty members and one is forty, so the amount going into the assembly is larger than that going into the senate. There is an unwritten law in California that governors do not touch that. What is the counterpart? The legislature doesn't touch the governor's family in his office.

So governor after governor has said, "You work out your own thing, and I won't tinker around with it. And I'll work on my thing and I would just as soon you'd leave it alone." And the legislature reciprocates doing that. And so that's the way it operates.

So Dymally is saying, "I want to use some of the contingency fund of the senate to set up a Democratic caucus, and I want Harmer to have equal for his caucus." Well, that was a new approach. A lot of people didn't like it. They liked what they had. But it prevailed. And the reason it prevailed was the result of. . . . Let's see, that follows the--we've got this turned around. It was after the migration of

assembly people to the senate that Harmer and Dymally had the clout to do it with.

DOUGLASS: You see, that was '67. In '66, there had been the . . .

STIERN: Because they had both been assemblymen, they had their following. Together with that, and some other people who wanted caucuses, it happened.

DOUGLASS: And this is what you call the "assemblyizing" of the senate.

STIERN: I call that the "assemblyization of the senate." Because along with them came a lot of other people, Clair [W.] Burgener, and [Anthony C.] Beilenson, and [George E.] Danielson, and Roberti, and on, and on, and on of people that came across in that migration. And then from then on, we had Democratic caucuses, and we had Republican caucuses. This wastes time. Sometimes they go longer than they should. They both meet at the same time. And one group of men are twiddling their fingers while the other group are caucusing. And it's cumbersome. It's expensive. It calls for staff. It calls for a room. It calls for equipment, desks and furniture. And publications and all that stuff. It involves political involvement at election time.

DOUGLASS: Would your point be that really in a body as small as the senate, it's an unnecessary

overload?

STIERN: I don't think it's necessary. I really don't. But in the assembly, a much bigger house, with that crazy formula they have over there where the speaker is almighty, it might be needed. I know you know how that's done over there. If it isn't the majority party electing the speaker, it's a coalition that puts it together, which is how Willie [L.] Brown [Jr.] started out. You know, when [Leo T.] McCarthy and [Howard L.] Berman were struggling to become speaker, the Democrats were split, and Willie Brown put together a coalition of Democrats and Republicans to win the speakership.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

STIERN: So one thing begat something else. So now you have a caucus. When you have a caucus, you have to have a caucus leader. And the caucus leader has to have a staff.

DOUGLASS: There is a whole hierarchy.

STIERN: Then you have to have a floor leader of that party. So each party has a floor leader, and he has to have staff and an office and other people. And then you have to have a whip, and so you choose a whip and a substitute whip. So each party has a whip. And it goes on and on and on, and the expense of the thing just keeps

going like that. [points upward] This would have driven Hugh Burns out of his mind, somebody doing a thing like that. It all happened after he left the senate, and I'm glad it did, under the circumstances.

DOUGLASS: I know the comment has been made about the assembly that the period in '61, when [Jesse M.] Unruh became speaker and the politicizing more of the way the assembly functioned, that really didn't happen in the senate until later, is that what you are saying? In the later sixties.

STIERN: No. We didn't have a man like Unruh.

DOUGLASS: Well, I meant party was not quite as important.

STIERN: No, it was not.

DOUGLASS: Whereas in the assembly, this was going on from '61 on.

STIERN: Before partisanism the idea of a Democrat thinking of a Republican with a horns and tail didn't occur. You didn't feel that way about each other. In fact, I don't know how many talks I have given to high school classes and junior college classes on the legislative procedure, and all where I quoted six or eight people in each house of both parties that I respected deeply because of their ability. They are there, and you gain from them. You comb the best thinking of both groups. But pretty soon when you get to the point that you can't even

walk in to the coffee room and get a cup of coffee because the Republican caucus is meeting in there. Everything goes silent until your coffee is poured and you leave, and somebody is yelling at me, "Walt, why don't you change your registration. We'd love to have you in here. [Laughter] A few jokes are made like that, but then once I'm out, the caucus continues. And I think that this has not been a healthy thing.

III. INITIAL EXPERIENCES AND COMMITTEE SERVICE

DOUGLASS: That's very interesting. Let me talk a little bit specifically; I think that first experience is so significant. It sounds like you felt comfortable fairly soon in the senate.

STIERN: They made you feel at ease. Everybody was willing to help. You weren't going to make any dumb mistakes. If they could see you going down that direction, somebody would come and whisper to you to take another approach. Had you overlooked this or that or something? And you might change your presentation. Or I might even sit down and say, "I'd like to pass. Put this on file until tomorrow. I'll take it up tomorrow." And then come on with a whole new debate. And often that would be a Republican member who would come back and offer helpful suggestions.

DOUGLASS: So you sort of were apprenticed to someone who would help you with the skills of the floor?

STIERN: On the skills and techniques and that kind of thing. And, of course, you never forget that because it is really helpful to a new person. It still goes on with your seatmate, regardless of party. But now there are innuendos about why you do it a certain way. You know, you take a Republican senator who stood up on the floor and made a speech on a certain bill, and they all went for it. If [Governor C. George] Deukmejian vetoes it, when you attempt to override that veto, he turns himself right around on a bill that was perfect two weeks ago, before it went to the governor's office, and he will give it a "no" vote to protect his governor. And it works with both parties the same way.

Agriculture Committee

DOUGLASS: Let's talk a little bit about those first experiences on the committees. Agriculture and Education, you have served on during your whole tenure. A man named [Paul L.] Byrne was the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. What were your first impressions of that committee, and, say, Byrne as chairman? The work of that committee that first year.

STIERN: Well, one of the reasons I wanted to be on the committee in the first place was I had done a

lot of study of the lack of agriculture regulation for consumer protection in California, as a veterinarian. I was shocked beyond belief at what was allowed in this state, and that nobody had done anything about it, and nobody had even thought about it. And so I came on hard the first couple of years I was there, saying, "You know, I am not belittling anybody because things haven't happened, but there are things that I know better about agriculture than anybody in the senate, even the farmers. There there are, of course, things that I don't know that I have to learn from people who are attorneys and businessmen and insurance men." And I went off after some of the public health aspects of things and what was allowed to be fed and consumed by human beings in California. It was atrocious. You can't believe how awful it was. And they (the committee) were surprised that they had a person who knew about this. There had never been a veterinarian in the legislature. They had never looked at the health aspects of food in restaurants or cafes, or food preparation or food preservation, and all that kind of thing. And I was coming on strong in that area.

So they listened to me, and I got a lot of support in the senate. I took me longer to get

it in the assembly because they had to get to know me. You don't learn to know someone in that house quite as quickly. Not only do you gain respect from people that know that you know something about those fields, but you also get teased about some of the things you do.

Since Kern County is such a powerful agricultural county in the nation--agriculture is very big here, very important here, and also water is very important here, water to support the agricultural industry--I wanted to be on the AG-Water Committees very, very badly and tried very hard to get on. And they allowed me to be on it.

Public Health and Safety Committee

Then I wanted to be on the Public Health [and Safety] Committee. It's a poor name for it. Everything that had to do with medicine--human medicine, dentristy, nursing, veterinary medicine, podiatry, chiropratics, osteopathic physicians and surgeons, hospitals clinics, you name it--whatever it was, was all dumped into that committee. So I wanted to have a handle on that subject area.

DOUGLASS: Now a man named [John F.] Thompson was chairman of that committee.

STIERN: Thompson was the chairman. He was an insurance man from San Jose. And I was the vice chairman

of it to start with.

DOUGLASS: Right. It was a relatively small committee.

STIERN: It was a small committee. There were five people on that committee.

DOUGLASS: [Nathan F.] Coombs, [Nelson S.] Dilworth, Slattery, and Stiern.

STIERN: It wasn't a major committee, but it carried a lot of major subject material.

DOUGLASS: Was that small a working group easier in a way? Did you feel you got more done?

STIERN: Well, they were flying blind. They didn't know what they were doing, in a lot of cases. If you looked at the profession of these people, and the background, they had no medical or public health knowledge. You talk about medical budgets for the University of California, and you talk about hospitalization planning, eventually Medi-Cal and all the things that were going to develop, and hospital accreditation. They were lost. They didn't know what they were talking about.

I had this knowledge coming from several directions--as a veterinarian, as a food and produce and processing inspector for the military, which included food preservation, animal products, classifications of food and how the "sharp" practices are in factories and packing houses and creameries and dairies.

Along with the fact that I also did everything that had to be done with restaurants where troops were, as to whether they were going on or off limits for public health purposes. So I had a great span of index coming into the committee. To a lot of people, that's overwhelming. It's always overwhelming to a physician because a physician never knows, and has to learn, that veterinarians have more training in some fields than they have. There are reasons for this, but it takes them awhile to learn it.

The reason is economics. A veterinarian has to be able to run his own laboratory and his own hospital. I can't tell a women, "Take your dog up to the top of floor of this medical building and have her x-rayed. Then take her down to the lab and do that. And come back in three days." [Laughter] I had to learn to do all that myself. And veterinarians are so trained that in military medicine they can run human laboratories, one as big as Fort Lewis. Have you ever seen Fort Lewis in western Washington?

DOUGLASS: No.

STIERN: It's miles and miles and miles long. It takes you thirty minutes to drive past it. The chief of the lab is a veterinarian. So a lot of medical people are not aware of this.

So when I came on, I found that there were people this committee listened to and as gospel. There was a man whose name was [Ben H.] Read, who was a lobbyist. He represented the Public Health League of California. The committee did whatever he told them to do. He says, "The medical profession feels this." "Fine. Thank you, Mr. Read. We're glad to know that." And they would just do it. And I challenged that because a lot of times they were wrong. These witnesses were doing what any lobbyist would do, they were building it up for their own gratification, not necessarily for what was best for medical consumers in California. So when you had a new person like me sitting on there as a vice chairman, the medical profession could see trouble coming. I might some day be chairman of Business and Professions [Committee] or be chairman of this committee after Thompson. So I had some things that I could see coming. It was a new era. They hadn't had a man on this committee before with this medical knowledge.

DOUGLASS: How did this lobbyist respond to you?

STIERN: Well, [Laughter] he tried to be as friendly as he could. But, you see, I made logic when I made my arguments of why we should do things certain ways and why we shouldn't do things certain ways.

DOUGLASS: So the committee began to see at least some things were not set in concrete and they were arguable?

STIERN: Exactly. Which was leading eventually to a bill, and I'll tell you about that later, that I carried that was a very, very important bill. But it was a bill [S.B. 403, 1965] being carried by a veterinarian, not a physician, by a veterinarian who--oh, my God, on top of it--was a Democrat. It was the Medical Disclipinary Act of California, which was a way of keeping in check physicians who got out of line and practiced unorthodox medicine to the detriment of people that they worked on. And there was no way to control that because one doctor wouldn't report another one. I got in real hot water with this bill it took me three years to get. That's the one I told you was on the books of seventeen states at the present time.

And I wound up visiting every medical association in this state. Standing on the platform before them. I never will forget that era. Because when you are talking about Los Angeles County, you are talking about an auditorium on Wilshire Boulevard, and you are talking about--are you ready for this--thousands and thousands of members in the Los Angeles Medical Society. And I'm standing on the

platform, having been invited. "Senator Stiern, we want you to explain this bill on medical discipline to these people." And it's a solid room that looks like a political convention, with signs that say, "Pacoima," and another one says, "Pomona," all the sectors of doctors in Los Angeles who don't know each other. They are lucky to know each other in their own sector. And I had one man help me at that Los Angeles thing, which was the key that turned the whole thing around. The Kern County Medical Society wanted to crucify me, they hated the bill so much. They didn't want it.

I am telling you this because eventually I came to dueling with the California Medical Association. But eventually I got this bill. In other words, I was something new in the senate. I don't say that in an egotistical way. They had had farmers; they had had businessmen, and insurance men. They even had chaplains out of the navy, and school teachers and college professors and college superintendents, and all kinds of people. But they had never had a veterinarian.

DOUGLASS: To talk about Public Health and Safety [Committee], I take it there really wasn't much staff. So that if a question. . . . First of all, they had to know enough to question

something and want information. You would be helpful at that. But did they have staff who could even get the information?

STIERN: No. One of the early on bills that I had--and you have a notation of it there--was a barber situation. And that was strange because it was funny. I handled it in a strange way. And the senate [Laughter] at that time never let me forget it.

And it was a situation where you could take. . . . You know, becoming a barber shouldn't be all that difficult. If you go through a barber school, you should be able to pass the barber's board at that time, just like a cosmetologist with the cosmetology board. But I had a man here in Bakersfield who seemed to me like an intelligent person, who went through barber's college. And he took the board four times, and he failed it each time. And he came to me and said, "I don't know what to do or where to go. It's not that difficult. I think I'm doing a good job. But I think I'm being treated in a prejudicial sort of a way." I was young and green and hadn't been in very long. He said, "You know, you have to take a model with you. You have to take somebody to sit in a chair, and you have to do the things they tell

you to do with that person."

And I said, "Well,"--I did a crazy thing, my two daughters have never forgotten this to this day--"this time I'll be your model." He almost fell off his chair when I told him. He said, "What do you mean, you'll be my model?" And I said, "You sign up to take the board again, and I'll be your model. And I'll sit in the chair." And I knew there were twenty-eight chairs in a row, and what they are, they are winos and stumblebums and everybody off of Los Angeles' Main Street and Sixth Street. They gather down there before the examination. The barber candidates all go out and choose one, bring him in, to do all the haircuts and shaves and shampoos and all the things they have to do, facials and all this thing.

And I said, "We'll go down from Bakersfield early, and I'll just go get in line." Well, you know, I let my hair grow, and I let my beard grow, and I got looking pretty tacky. And my daughter thought. . . . You know, in those days, we had letters on our cars telling who we were, my car had an "S34" plate on it, Senate 34 plate. And my oldest daughter said, "Daddy, what is a highway patrolman going to think of seeing a senator riding down the road like that." My daughter was very conscious about how

her dad looked. I went to this thing, and I sat in this chair, and I listened to the conversations. I listened to the board of examiners talking with each other as they walked up and down between these chairs. There was a part where there was room where they had to go in and take an oral. I positioned myself in a chair nearest that room so that I could hear what was going on in that room.

And there was shenanigans going on. It's a board that is paid; one of the few paid boards in California. And so the next day, after I came home, I picked up the phone and I called the man who was the chairman of the board. I said, "I want to talk to you about something that disturbs me." And he said, "What would that be, Senator Stiern." Oh, he was terribly respectful, talking to Senator Stiern. And I said, "Well, I don't understand some of the things that you do." And I quoted some of what were really irregularities that even I could see which should not have been done in an exam. And he said, "Well, how do you know about this? It's just word of mouth." I said, "No. It's not word of mouth. I was there." And it went silent on the phone, and I thought this guy was going to die. He said, "You were there." I said, "Yes." And he said, "Where were you?" I

said, "I was in one of the chairs. I was a model."

I went back and in detail I put a bill together that affected barbers and barbering, a packet of bills, four or five bills, as a result of it. And, of course, I never heard the end of that; the extent that I would go to do a thing like that. Except you can't do that all the time. You just don't have enough time to do that. I did it again with a fabric board thing. I went over and watched a man from Bakersfield that couldn't pass the dry cleaner, fabric board exam. Although he had licenses in six states, he couldn't pass the board in California. And I did this kind of thing on a few occasions. But you just can't. You don't have the time to do that.

DOUGLASS: What was happening in the barber problem? Did they have a set against this guy? Or was it just haphazard, the way they were treating the situation?

STIERN: Well, I totally don't know. But you can tell when people look at the man's work and don't look at another man's work. And then, eventually, they flunked him with no reason or cause, and he never knows why. How does he prove himself? He can't even go back to

barber's college for a brush up for thirty days to learn.

DOUGLASS: So it's just the whole matter of conducting business?

STIERN: It was. And the verbal questions were irregular. They were too scientific for barbering, on skin diseases and hair diseases, which veterinarians know something about. And made real easy for others.

DOUGLASS: Well, then you sponsored a resolution (S.R. 185) on that for a study, and then I guess the legislation came out, maybe not that year.

STIERN: There were some interesting things that came out of that as a result of it. Eventually, the board was fired. The question was whether one of the men on the board was going to go to prison for some irregularities. And the thing got straightened out. But back in those days, a governor would appoint a man to the barber's board, and he was his barber. You know, not on the basis of his knowledge. And there were fights always between barber schools and barbers practicing in the same area. And that kind of thing. But, anyway, that's what happened there.

Education Committee

DOUGLASS: So the other committee, besides Agriculture, that you were on during your whole tenure was

Education. I've gathered from your earlier comments that you have had driving interest in this.

STIERN: I did.

DOUGLASS: And [Donald L.] Grunsky was the chairman when you went on.

STIERN: A very fine chairman. A Republican, an outstanding man. He was a very unusual person, a good person. Bright, brilliant. I have nothing but the best to say about him.

DOUGLASS: Now that would have been a very important committee. So was Agriculture.

STIERN: It was.

DOUGLASS: Education is where so much happened. And this is an outstanding group. Albert Rodda and you and Senator [Fred S.] Farr were on that.

STIERN: Let me tell you the problem with the Education Committee. It's not seen by the public. I don't think even school people see it. Most members don't want to be on the Education Committee. Then there are people who are dying to be on the Education Committee, but not very many. You see, the Education Committee was a large committee. When I went on it was thirteen members in the senate (I think it was thirteen members).[1] When I left it and came home on

1. In 1959, the Senate Education Committee was an eleven-member standing committee.

retirement, it was nine. Few want to be on that committee. Do you know why?

DOUGLASS: Why?

STIERN: It is a hard-working committee. There are two things about it that they dislike. It depends how you think up there politically. One, is they have a language all their own. "I haven't got time to learn their blankety-blank"--I've heard people say this--"language. I haven't got time for that." And, secondly, it's not a "juice" committee. Do you know what a "juice" committee is?

DOUGLASS: Finance and Insurance is a "juice committee."

STIERN: You are not going to get money thrown into your war chest for next election from little retired teachers who are coming up there fighting for retired teachers' salary increases, or some mother coming up there, fighting for autistic children, or somebody coming up there interested in bilingual education. Those are not the people who are going to put money into your campaign. Who wants to be on that committee? You see, it's not a financing committee for your war chest. It has a language all of its own. It takes an awful long time, because witnesses come in droves from all over the state, and you had to be polite and hear them all. And your

meetings go to midnight and on. I've been there until two o'clock in the morning.

So nobody wants to be on it. So the people who are on it are those who are dedicated, like Grunsky, Rodda, Farr, myself, people like Diane [E.] Watson. People who are committed people. Now one of my greatest principles is there are two things in this country, and two things in California, that make this country great and different from any other country. One is probably the free enterprise system, although I have to call it a modified free enterprise system, not a real free enterprise system. And, secondly, public education for its citizenry. Regardless of race, status, family, rank, title, its there. And perhaps the third thing, of course, is the mix. There is no nation in the world that has the cultural mix we have.

For somebody to get up off his haunches and leave his country, his friends and relatives, forever to immigrate to this country has something that infuses this country with people with drive. And so public education is very important. I think it's the key. I get very distressed with racism and discrimination and all this, and say, "If we don't make it in education, we'll never make it." Because that's the place it has to be keyed for. I can't

believe that really educated people could find themselves supporting that kind of thing. But it is a long, hard, continuous drive.

DOUGLASS: So the kinds of people who believe that would be on the committee.

STIERN: So you believe that. And then the constitution says, sometimes people forge there is a section in the California constitution that says that the first money of tax recovery is dedicated to education, period.

DOUGLASS: Right. People have forgotten that.

STIERN: They forget that, and they like to forget it and just pass it off. There is a second thing that goes along with this, a secondary meaning that has been developed, if not in law, at least in practice. And that is, that every child, regardless of his mental or physical ability, is entitled to a much as that child can learn in its lifetime. That may be only knowing how to put its underclothes on and feed itself, but it is entitled to that. If that's as far as that child can go mentally, so be it. If it's a physically handicapped child, the same is true. You do everything you can to make that possible. So we have special buses made, we have special classrooms made, we have special schools, we have special blackboards down low for kids going blind, and clocks down low, so

that every child gets the maximum that the public school system can give. That goes all the way from graduate level to pre-kindergarten and all. Way down. And anywhere else you can do it. If you really sincerely believe that, the Education Committee is where it all is.

What was interesting in the development of the Master Plan for Higher Education was when we saw 72 percent of the pupils in college in California, freshmen and sophomores, were in the community college system. This was way past the percentage it should be. It should have been higher in the other segments. Then when we realized we had to double, in fifteen years, the facilities, the idea evolved of using private schools, like your group [Claremont Colleges], USC [University of Southern California], Stanford, Occidental and Mills and Dominican and all the private schools up and down the state--Santa Clara, the whole thing--to use their facilities by providing them with funds in the way of scholarships and grants. So they got their oar into it too. And we did. And, in 1975, we had doubled everything in collegiate education in this state. And I am so proud of that, that that could happen. Because it was a terrible, terribly hard challenge. But it took dedicated people along the way to do it. It

took a lot of dedicated people. And some people, strangely, are not even interested in that. "Tell something about that, Walt, I don't want to even listen to the debate."

And I have always said that in the education profession I think there is an error, there should be a glossary of educational terms. Do you remember? You may not, you are younger than I am. But when I was a kid in the third, fifth, and sixth grades, we had a speller, a little book about that thick. And it spelled things and then defined things, and spelled things again and defined things again. And we should have that glossary today so that it could be placed in the hands of new school board members and in the hands of legislators so that they would know the difference between a unified school system and a consolidated school system and what we used to call a point 1-, point 2-, point 3-child. Or that we know the terms of: what is an autistic child? And how is an autistic child different than a mentally-retarded child or a child that may have some other mental or physical affliction?

I was in a committee hearing, and one of our senators serving on the Senate Education Committee was a lawyer, and he wanted very badly to serve on that committee. And in a solidly

packed room in Sacramento, which was Room 4202 or 4203, there must have been 400 people in that room, he made the question, when we were talking about point 1- and point 2-children (we don't use the term anymore). But he asked to be recognized and the chair recognized him, and he said, "What is a point 2-child? What is a point 1-child?" And the auditorium laughed at him. It was made up of teachers, superintendents, and school board members and all kinds of people. And yet this man is one of the smartest minds that was up there. He said, "I just don't know." And so the chair explained to him what a point 1-child and what a point 2-child was. And he said, "Oh, thank you very much." But he was willing to learn, you see. And education does have a language all its own. Some of these people don't want to fool around with that; they are just not that interested.

IV. MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

DOUGLASS: Well, we could talk about the Master Plan for Higher Education now.[1] It was in '59 that Brown, the governor, at least mentioned that there

1. Result of A.C.R. 88, introduced by Dorothy Donahoe in 1959 to chart a course in higher education from 1960-1975. The major provisions of the Master Plan were incorporated in the Donahoe Higher Education Act, S.B. 33, 1961 Leg. Sess., Cal. Stat. 392 (1961), adding Division 16.5, entitled Higher Education to the Education Code, named after her death.

probably ought to be a study. According to me, in April, Brown called on educators to provide a master plan for higher education. And then the Donahoe bill, so-called, was passed in 1960. Now were you in '59, as a committee member, at this question?

Dorothy M. Donahoe

STIERN: Yes. With her, and working with her. Dorothy [Donahoe] was a personal friend of mine long before she ever went to Sacramento. And, briefly, without getting into Dorothy Donahoe too much, you have to remember that she was a woman who always said, "I am a woman who serves in the legislature with many disadvantages." And she was. She had some very strange things. She was an early-on polio victim, with a shortened limb, who had a severe limp, as a result of polio. She was also quite asthmatic, to the point that she had to carry special equipment with her to help take care of herself because there were times when she would almost pass out as a result of that. She had nothing more than a high school diploma. When she was elected to the legislature, she was the registrar of Bakersfield High School, and she was active in things like BPW [Business and Professional Women] and all kinds of

organizations. And they all helped her all over the state to get elected. Came here in droves, in buses and helped her with all kinds of precinct walking and everything else. Both parties, because they wanted another woman in the legislature.

And so she was elected, and she went up to Sacramento. She had had no collegiate training at all. She had had these different medical problems that troubled her. She was a single woman. She said, "I always have to battle men all the time." And she'd joke about that. And when she went to Sacramento, she became chairman of the Education Committee in the assembly.

When we went through this dilemma about running against that "old man" senator I was telling you about, we thought that the first person who should have a crack at it, if she wanted it, would be Dorothy. To come across and run as the senator from Kern County and maybe the first woman senator. And these two men, Williamson and myself, who had decided we were going to go to the legislature, went to her and asked her if she would like to do that. We were both thinking about running, and we could both run in the assembly and she could run in the senate. She had seniority on us, and it wouldn't hurt our feelings at all. And she

said, "Well, I have to think about that." And she did think about it, and she decided not to because she thought the chances of getting elected to the senate were slim. She was in a strong position as chairman of the Education Committee, so she said, "You two boys flip a coin and decide which one is going to run for the senate and which one is going run for the other assembly seat. I am going to stay where I am." [Laughter] And that's just exactly what we did. It came up heads, and I ran for the senate.

DOUGLASS: You mean you really did flip a coin? You're kidding.

STIERN: We really did. John Williamson and I flipped a coin as to whether one of us was going to run for the assembly and one of us was going to run for the senate.

DOUGLASS: That's amazing.

STIERN: And it came up heads. I won. I ran for the senate, and he ran for the assembly. So he was cosigner with her on that bill over in the assembly. I cosigned as principal coauthor in the senate to carry it on the senate side on the floor. And so we were off and running. Now how did I get off on this? Oh, I wanted you to know about Dorothy.

DOUGLASS: About her background, and then we were going to

talk about the bill and how it evolved.

STIERN: So, you see, she had a zeal for education. She had a zeal for something she never had, which was higher education. She wanted that for everybody. She wanted it fairly. She wanted dollars well spent, and she wanted the dollars to be worth a dollar for a dollar that you spent.

Stanislaus State College

And this Stanislaus thing, which was a fiasco, just showed you where you were going. We couldn't afford that kind of thing anymore.

DOUGLASS: Well, now explain that because you mentioned this to me earlier. Let's get this on the record about how this evolved.

STIERN: The fiasco at that time really was--the question was--how many University of California campuses and how many state college campuses should there be in California. And there were what looked like a sufficient number, except when we got to 1960 and we began figuring out where the boys and girls were at all grade levels (first grade, third grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, eighth grade, sophomore, high school, junior high school). We could see what we were going to be in for. We didn't have the facilities to handle them when they got there, if you were talking about a fifteen-year span. Not even with the

private schools, not even with the community colleges.

So it became a dogfight about where you were going to put colleges, and everybody got involved with this. They got to thinking about this. The man from Ventura wanted a state college down there because there is no state college in that area, a growing area. The man in San Mateo County wanted one in there. There was none in there. There is one at San Francisco State, but not there. I could see the need for one down here. But, in a collusion kind of an operation, the chairman of the Committee on Education in the senate, a man named Hugh [P.] Donnelly, who was a longtime senator, one of those older gentlemen who had been there a long time, wanted one in Stanislaus County. And his counterpart was Assemblyman Ralph Brown, I think it was Ralph M. Brown.

DOUGLASS: Right.

STIERN: Who wanted it in Stanislaus County too, and he was from Modesto. Now with the speaker of the house working with the chairman of Education in the senate, you've got a hard rock to get past if you are going to buck those people doing that. And there was no place to go to say, "Where is the place to go to say 'Where is the place we need this?'?" We know it now. Right

now we know exactly where the next state college should be if we build one. You can guess where it is, can't you? You wouldn't have to think very long if you've got mind going in that direction. It's north San Diego County, right along the county line. The growth in there, you know; San Diego State can't go much farther. Well, anyway, these people got on this kick. And they started on it. Stanislaus State College, we need that there. And the upshot of it was it happened because they had political clout. And it was allowed. It operated for its first years in the fair grounds of Stanislaus County. I saw it. You know, corrals, paddocks for animals, no way could you call it a college. We didn't have the money for it, and they didn't have the students for awhile. But they limped along. And I think in a period, I am being figurative here, not exact, but like for a four-year period, they only increased their enrollment something three or four students over what they had the first year they were there. Which showed there wasn't the backup for this.

So people said, "Enough, enough!" We cannot do that anymore because when you start a college, there is no end to it. After you have laid the first brick, you know you are continually going on to do something in that

location with a college. So we have to have some way of planning. How are we going to do it?

The Case for Bakersfield State College

Well, the very first plan was to develop a Coordinating Council for Higher Education. And so we took three from the university, three from the state college system, three from the community colleges, three from the private colleges and sat them down. And then we soon added three more public-at-large, appointed by the governor. But, at first, it was just those four segments.

DOUGLASS: And Arthur G. Coons was the chairman, president of Oxy [Occidental College] at that time.

STIERN: Arthur G. Coons was the catalyst. He chaired it, and he did all the pre-writing on it. If you look at those books, he was the one who put them out. And it was decided by the legislature that unless you convince that council of a need, you are not going to get a bill through this legislature, or the money for, or the authorization to establish a new postsecondary education institution. And here I am, green as grass, having arrived there, in Sacramento. And who are the people that I am up against, that are wanting these things? The senator from San Mateo was a man who had been there a long time.

Do you know where he is today?

DOUGLASS: No.

STIERN: He was sent to prison in San Pedro, a federal prison. Strange as that may seem. His name was Richard [J.] Dolwig, you may remember that name. He was to serve time in prison for some things he did when he got out of the legislature. But he wanted San Mateo State College, you see. [George] Miller [Jr.], a powerhouse, chairman of the Finance Committee, a friend of everybody in the legislature, knew everybody, he wanted one for Contra Costa County. And a man whose name was [John J.] Hollister [Jr.] (and if you know that name in Santa Barbara area, the historicalness of it), he wanted one for Ventura County. And Walter Stiern was saying, "We need one in the south San Joaquin Valley, particularly maybe in Kern County." And that was the siting possibilities in this thing. Well, I still hadn't been there very long, and I wondered how I was going to run into this. Because the committee was chaired by. . . . As I recall, it was chaired by Glenn [M.] Anderson, California's lieutenant governor and president of the senate, for some reason.

DOUGLASS: Which committee? Was it a joint committee?

STIERN: No. It was the Coordinating Council for Higher Education. But each one of us had our chance to

go in before the council and make our case for the college. And I thought, "Oh, Walter, you are going to get smothered. These men are so knowledgeable, so capable. So powerful. So much clout. So much knowhow. A guy just coming up here is not going to have it happen. It just is not going to happen." And so they listened to each one of us make our case. I built my case around one thing and one thing only, and that's really what brought this college here.

There is no metropolitan center in the United States that doesn't have a four-year college within a hundred miles. Only Bakersfield; Bakersfield is the only one. In the Bakersfield area, they have to go to Fresno State, they go to Cal Poly, they go to Northridge, they go somewhere. There are community colleges in that area, several of them, Taft, Bakersfield, College of the Sequoias in Tulare [County], one up in Kings County and so forth and so on. I built my case around that. I made it very strong. You need a commuting-type school where students can come onto that campus from the three south San Joaquin counties. If a student can get into Bakersfield College and get an AA [Associated Arts] , and transfer into the proposed school and get a bachelor's, they'll make it from there. If they

want to get a master's or a doctorate, they'll get it. Well, we prevailed, and I got it. They accepted my proposal.

The original bill that created California University, Bakersfield has very few lines in it. I've got copies of it if you were to need it. I think there are seven lines in the bill. All it basically says is: "A state college shall be established to serve the south San Joaquin Valley." We were thinking of Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties. The innuendo was probably "where the greatest population is would be the proper place." A strange thing as a result of that--something that has never happened in the history of California--and that was there were nine bona fide offers of sites to the state college system, as a gift. At the time, I was kind of shocked because some of them were in strange places. One was out on the Mojave Desert, one was on the side of a mountain up here, one was where the Kern River comes out of the canyon, one was at the Tulare [County] line. There were all kinds of different things. But they were all self-serving if you dug into them.

And even the Kern County Land Company, which became Tenneco West, the Kern County Land Company gave the ground where the college is located. When they gave that ground, we

thought, "Oh, what generous people these people were." There was nothing out there. I have chased cattle around there, vaccinating and treating them, through cottonwood bushes, and sometimes flooded with the Kern River and everything else. They gave the hole in a doughnut. The doughnut was worth a billion dollars. The hole in the doughnut is the campus site of the college. So by giving that hole in the doughnut, you can see what's happened. There was nothing out there. Believe me, you went a mile before you saw anything, and then, all of a sudden, when the college came, everything came, you see. And they knew just exactly what they were doing.

DOUGLASS: Pretty smart.

STIERN: They were. They were very smart. And these other people's site offers were the same thing. They had some of the same motives in mind. And so it came to pass. I introduced Senate Bill 75 (1960), and I had John C. Williamson and Jack T. Casey (the assemblyman at that time because Dorothy passed away the first year I was up there). And we put this bill in to establish this college.

[End of Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

Death of Dorothy Donahoe

STIERN: Dorothy Donahoe had passed away, and Jack [T.] Casey, a professor at Bakersfield College, a history teacher, was elected. And so his was the other Kern County seat in the assembly with John Williamson. So I authored the bill. They coauthored it, and we ran it through. And it went easily because we could stand up and honestly say that the Coordinating Council had made this study, and they found out that it is true, everything that has been said, and this is the logical place. In fact, they went so far as to say, "That's where Stanislaus should have been built." Because when Bakersfield took off, it took off not as fast, but it took off much faster than the Stanislaus campus.

DOUGLASS: To go back on the Master Plan just a minute, you had talked about the kind of misnomers that are created, in a sense, that the Master Plan for Higher Education had been known as [Governor] Brown's. And, actually, of course, it was named for Dorothy Donahoe because . . .

STIERN: Yes. I wanted to tell you about the Grunksy and Miller action.

DOUGLASS: Yes. It was symbolic pretty much, putting her name on, wasn't it?

STIERN: Everybody knew that we were going to have to change what had happened in Stanislaus. We

could not bear that kind of thing, the siting of a facility solely on the basis of pork barrel politics. And so it was conceived that we would have to have a master plan of some kind. Well, different people had different ideas how to do this.

And one senator, whose name was George Miller, a Democrat from Contra Costa County, very, very bright person, chairman of the Finance Committee and everything else, he had a plan that he had worked out. It was called the "Miller concept." While he was doing that, another state senator named Donald L. Grunsky, from Watsonville, who was a Republican and was chairman of the Education Committee, had another plan, which was what he thought of as the "Grunsky Plan." And these two plans differed a little bit. They weren't exactly the same. But these men had both been working earnestly and conscientiously on a plan.

Over in the assembly, Dorothy M. Donahoe had been doing this, a plan that she had. And her plan was different than theirs, but there were elements of it that were similar. And she had worked very, very hard, and she had done a lot of moving all around the state, talking to people who should be knowledgeable on that. And they knew that she was a workhorse of a

legislator in doing what she was doing. And Dorothy overextended herself. She was a person, who, with her health problems, probably shouldn't be on the go constantly, but she was. And she was on the go constantly, going talking in different parts of the state about different things in education.

And one time, she overtaxed herself and came back, and Monday morning she wasn't in her seat in the assembly. And a lady who was an assistant to her came to me, and she said, "I've been out to see Dorothy, and she doesn't look well at all. I wish you could go out and take a look at her and talk to her." And Dorothy was not Christian Scientist, but her mother was. And she respected her mother, who was living with her. She didn't get help as soon as she should. And I went back to the senate and got Dr. Stephen Teale, who was a physician. And I said, "Steve, I know she loves you, and you love her. As an individual legislator, I know she would not be offended if you went and looked her over. Would you go out and take a look at her? She doesn't look good to me." I said, "She is very cyanotic, and she doesn't look right." And he said, "Sure, I'll go." And he got in his car with me, and we went out to her house. He went into the room with her, the bedroom, and he was out in three

minutes. He says, "We've got to get an ambulance, and we've got to get this girl to a hospital." This was ten o'clock in the morning. He said, "Walter, I don't think she'll last to four-thirty." And so I rode in the ambulance with her to the hospital. I never will forget that trip. And I was with her when she died [April 4, 1960]. [stated with emotion]

But what a pall came over the legislature at the time. They always put a black wreath on the desk of a dead member. And eulogies are recited. And when the senate convened that afternoon, Donald Grunsky and George Miller stood up and said what a tremendous person she was, and "I am willing to back away. This is going to be the Dorothy Donahoe Act." And Grunsky was just as generous. He did the same thing.

And then as her bill was picked up and developed and brought over to our side, we paired parts of the Grunsky and Miller bills that we thought were good that were not in Dorothy's bill. And in some places where her bill was weak or repetitious or something, we drew some of those parts out. So the bill is actually the words of those three people. And the name was graciously given by these two authors, who said, "We think it should go down

in history, if it passes, as the Dorothy Donahoe Act." A woman who had no higher education herself dedicated, herself and worked to a point where she really took her own life, in a sense. They both respected her very highly. And it went through like a hot knife through butter.[1] All the kinks had been worked out of it by that time.

DOUGLASS: Well, hadn't you carried a bill in the senate originally?

STIERN: Yes. I carried the original bill, or her bill, in the senate.

DOUGLASS: Her bill, the Donahoe bill, and then Miller and Grunsky . . .

STIERN: They had their bills. They were to be taken up yet. And sometimes people stall in saying, "We want to look at all these bills as a package and choose the one we think is the best." Sometimes authors will combine together, coauthor together. And so that's really what happened. Although I was there as a principal coauthor of her bill, I knew that that probably wouldn't be what would happen. And so the educational people of both committees, Dorothy's committee and the committee that Grunsky and I were on,

1. Amended to read, "This division shall be known as the Donahoe Higher Education Act," and passed April 6, 1960.

did this. And it had nothing to do with the executive branch at all. He (Governor Edmund G. Brown) signed it when it got down to him. And a lot of, you know,--what kind of person do I want to call them--the wheelhorse Democrats (the Republicans have them too) love to talk about the successes of their governors in the years gone by and attribute it to Brown. But, really, he had nothing to do with it.

That's why, as I told you, it troubled me the other day when I saw a reference that Pat Brown had told the legislature he wanted them to commit themselves to something in the field of higher education. That wasn't the way it worked. It was just that simple. People were just floored. She wasn't very old. Dorothy was probably fifty, somewhere in there.

DOUGLASS: And very respected.

STIERN: And highly, highly respected. There were only two women in the legislature. Pauline [L.] Davis, who was a woman whose husband had been in the assembly and he died, and she filled out his term, ran for reelection. And she and Dorothy were the only women in the legislature. A highly, highly respected person. Well thought of, admired like you can't believe. And I remember, before I was ever in the legislature, (she was in there long before I was) and she

would take trips out on the desert, drive through midnight, driving by herself in a car over the Tehachapis, and coming back home after meetings out there and all. No. She was fearless, just pushed herself so hard. And I don't think there was anybody that didn't enjoy her as a companion and associate.

V. MAJOR ISSUES (1960)

Squaw Valley Winter Olympics

DOUGLASS: Why don't we talk a little more about the 1960 session. There was one Extraordinary Session, which was called about the Squaw Valley site for the Olympics. Do you have any comments about that?

STIERN: Yes. That's kind of an interesting deal because that may have been the first special session I was in.

DOUGLASS: I think it was.

STIERN: Yes. And the winter Olympics had a pretty good shot at coming to the United States. And, of course, you know, Lake Placid is all set up for it, and other places wanted it. And amongst some of the people that wanted it was Californians. And the question was where do you put it?

There was a congressman who had served in the state senate, whose name was Johnson. They

called him [Harold T.] "Bizz" Johnson, I don't know where he got the name, but he was a congressman. And the powers that were to be knew that if you were going to do this at Squaw Valley, you were going to have to put a new highway in to handle what was going to be expected as a result of this. Because the highway going from Sacramento to Auburn and to Squaw Valley and on over to Reno was just a conventional highway at that time.

And so he wrangled funds, federal funds, through congress to redevelop that road on the basis that if we bring the winter Olympics to the United States and Squaw Valley is going to be one of those possibilities, you have to handle the crowds to get them in there. And so he, working as a congressman, getting the money to improve the state highway there, while the California legislature was wrangling every dollar it could get its hands on, any way it could to get the freeway built. There were developers and builders and requirements, and everything that had to be done to handle that site up there.

And so it required a special session. We were not in session when the commitments were made. And we went back in session to bring this thing into reality. So when you had to go up to

Squaw Valley and build the lift and the housing for people and all the parking lots and eating establishments, and all the things that were involved, it was a costly project. And the winter Olympics came to California. And that was why the freeway had to be built. And so the result of it is--Bizz Johnson knew exactly what he was doing--that big four-laner each way from Sacramento to Reno is a result of that money that we gobbled up because we got the Olympic games at Squaw Valley. Pure and simple, that's how we got that highway. And the state looked at it, and they could see it was worth it. If they could get that money to do that, it was worth it for them to put up state money to help get the thing there. And they did. We got criticized by some people. Some people thought it was great. You know, there were two sides.

DOUGLASS: Yes. Well, Squaw Valley itself was, of course, a disaster, wasn't it, in terms of the investments by the state?

STIERN: The investments and who owned the land, and how they got it and where it was located, and a lot of that behind-the-scene thing was a little sleazy in some cases. But that's how that came about.

Abolition of Death Penalty

DOUGLASS: You had another Extraordinary Session; this was

a result of the Caryl Chessman case and Brown asking for a moratorium on the death penalty. He had stayed Chessman's execution once.

STIERN: This is one of the strangest bills that we have had up there in thirty years. The situation was this, that Chessman was accused of--well, you know the case, what he was accused of--I think it was rape and murder together. [Sex crimes and kidnapping.] And he was in prison. And Brown, from the time he had been district attorney of San Francisco County and the whole time that he was the attorney general of California, had been anti-death penalty. And here he is, faced with this horrendous case. And it had attracted enormous attention. There had been nobody put to death off of death row for a long time, and he just didn't seem to want to be budged on this. And, really, he was trying to get the thing off his back, and saying, "Advise me on what I should do? How should I go?"

Well, the man who picked up the cudgel and did a run with it was Fred Farr, who was a state senator from Monterey County. Fred Farr was a very special kind of a man. He was a man that you really loved. He was a delicate man; he was very sensitive to the environment. He was very sensitive to trees and plants. He was very sensitive to animals. Hugh Burns used to call

him a posey picker. You know, he was "just too god-damned interested in flowers and trees and things like that. You are not a very realistic man. You are just reflecting Carmel and Monterey and all that." And, you know, in Monterey County, in Carmel, if you take down a tree, you put up a tree. If you take down a shrub, you put up a shrub. It's an extremely sensitive area to the environment, and he was a very gentle person. And he was just handmade to carry a bill to eliminate the death penalty. And he put the bill in and sought coauthors.

Well, now when you put your name on that bill, as a coauthor, you are doing something to your political career. And in a county like Kern that was not easy to do. It was a very, very hard thing to do. I cosigned that bill, as did several other people. Hugo Fisher from San Diego cosigned it. There were something like seven or eight cosigners on that bill.[1]

And what took place was something, as a result of this bill. I remember the bill was printed in blue ink because there was a special session, and the ink color changed, you know. And we made an effort. The people who were

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1. S.B. 1, "An Act to add Section 670 to the Penal Code, relating to the death penalty," introduced at the request of the governor by: Farr, Miller, Fisher, Rattigan, March 2, 1960.

prodeath penalty and the people who were anti-death penalty, both sides, made an extremely hard effort to find the best people who could come and testify before the California legislature on this subject. And this included people who were prison wardens out of big prisons. We had a man from Sing-Sing, we had the immediate past warden of San Quentin. We had top clergy. We had people who were in moral positions, of writing papers on moral things. People who were experts on repeat performances of people going to prison. And we had every aspect that you could think about, the best in the country. And we had them come to testify on this thing. It lasted two days. And it went around the clock. It started at eight in the morning, and it went until midnight.

The poor little radio station, the educational radio station it is now, called Channel 6 (it became KVIE), they covered this. And what they didn't realize, they didn't know what they had on their hands. I watched this thing because I knew the man that was the manager of the station, and they would come and they would make tapes of everything that was said. And, at a certain point, they would take it back to their studio, and they would run their program and then erase the tape. They

would take it off the tape and then they would bring their tapes back and reuse their same tape. They were erasing as they were translating into print what had been said and what was being done.

What we didn't realize. . . . It was the strangest thing, I never will forget it. The end of the second day, when this was over with, it hadn't been over an hour when Oslo, Berlin, Melbourne, Tokyo, Ottawa, everybody was calling, papers, wanting these tapes. And, of course, much of the testimony had been erased since they had only a small supply of tapes to work with. Nothing had been done like this in the history of the world, with the expertise as testifying before that committee. The pros and cons of the thing. Fine people not only that were committed to their feeling, but dedicated and knowledgeable and all this kind of thing. And the bill died in committee. [Decision to take no action reported on March 10, 1960.]

DOUGLASS: In the Senate Judiciary Committee.

STIERN: Right. It died in committee and didn't go anywhere. And even with that, Brown still renigged for a while. It was really hard for him to give a "yes" signal on Chessman. It just tore him up to do it. You know all the arguments of both sides of the death penalty.

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: And they were all brought out very clearly. In my case, my coauthorship didn't particularly hurt me for some reason. I was surprised. Politically, it didn't hurt me. I thought it would in my conservative county.

DOUGLASS: Were you asked to explain that vote by many people down here?

STIERN: Sure. People asked me why, and I did it the best I could. And my explanation was overly simple, overly simple. I just faced crowds of people, and I said, "You know, I am a doctor of veterinary medicine, and I have dedicated my life to saving life. Animal life. Humans are the top of the animal scale. And life is life. And I find it very hard to even euthanize an animal. It's difficult for me to do. It's difficult for a veterinarian to do." And I said, "I'd rather take a chance and lock a person up for sufficient amount of time, to be sure rather than make a misstep and wipe out the wrong person." And I was convincing enough, [Laughter] it's a country area, rural, personal thing, how I felt. And I said, "I recognize that there are a lot of people who disagree with this, and maybe we have to change this later. And maybe we have to make the law tougher. I don't know. But, if you were to sit there and

listen to the testimony from both sides, it was very hard not to do otherwise."

Well, of course, Farr went down in smoke, as the author of that bill. But there were people who are like Edwin [J.] Regan, who was the state senator from northern California, and who has just resigned as an appellate court justice in Sacramento, a very respected man, he was co-signed on that bill. There were a lot of people of position who were on there. I didn't feel too uncomfortable. Of course, the letters you get with this issue, you can't believe. To try and answer your mail is impossible.

DOUGLASS: Well, do you feel that this issue was . . .

STIERN: Before I leave it, this man at Channel 6 said, "Walter, I didn't know what I had." He said, "The money we could have made, selling these tapes and buying more tapes so that we could do much more of this kind of thing. And we just went back and wiped it all off." These people were aching for this. They wanted to get it, and they were substantial, strong papers. This was Rome. This was Melbourne. This was Oslo, London, all these papers.

DOUGLASS: Not only that, it would be a record you would like to have today of those hearings.

STIERN: It would. And it's not there.

DOUGLASS: Isn't this when Gordon Duffy of San Quentin said

that he didn't see any evidence that the death penalty was a deterrent?

STIERN: He did. He stood right up there saying that. And he said, "It is foolish. It is absolutely foolish. Recidivism is high, and it is not a rehabilitation." And the man who came out from Sing-Sing said the same thing. And yet there were people on the other side. It's probably the most thorough thing I have ever heard debated, that bill.

DOUGLASS: Now these were hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Is that right?

STIERN: Right.

DOUGLASS: How do you account for the failure? It was a close vote. Right?

STIERN: It was a close vote, but the death penalty prevailed at that time. And some time went by, and then Chessman was executed. And that's been the last execution in California. Death row is loaded. You know what that problem is. We are overcrowded. We could have an Attica really easily in this state, and we know it.

DOUGLASS: The question I was going to ask you is how do you think this issue, though, affected Pat Brown's career as governor, in terms of eventually being defeated?

STIERN: I think it hurt him. I think it was a factor. You know, there are several things that defeated

him. But this was one of those because it was such a heinous crime that people just feel. . . . Well, in the case of this fellow, the present fellow that they are trying to find a home for somewhere, who raped a teenager and cut her arms off. See, that, in a way, as horrible as that is, the woman is still alive. It isn't a case of the woman's death. But this guy thought she was dead, too, but she lived.

You don't change too many minds in two areas. One is death penalty, and the other is abortion. Those two things are hard. Later on, I shifted my opinion. Fourteen years later. The issue came up in Kern County. I did a survey in Kern County of how many people favored the death penalty, put a questionnaire out. I got an 82 percentage support of the death penalty. And I sat down and said to myself, "Well, Walter, you are always asked what makes your decision and your vote? Is it your own personal feeling? Or is it how your people feel?" And I said, "You know, I'm up here to represent my people. And if the County of Kern is 82 percent, I don't know how you could turn that down." It's hard to do.

And we had an assemblyman at that time who was an Hispanic. His name was Gonzales, Raymond [J.] Gonzales, and Raymond Gonzales was an

academic person who had a bachelor's, a master's, a doctorate from two universities, had taught at Bakersfield College and taught at Cal State Bakersfield, and then got elected to the assembly. The fact that a minority could be elected out of Kern County at that time was surprising to me, in the first place. But he went up there with the idea that he was going to teach the people of Kern County a lesson. They were not going to vote against capital punishment. And he took every stand he could, spoke everywhere he could, did everything he could to abolish capital punishment. He was there two years and he was out. They dumped him so fast in Kern County he didn't know what hit him.

So I later said, "If it goes on a ballot (which it later did and passed), and the county wants, I'm not going to interfere." Because if it's 82 percent in support of capital punishment on my survey, that's awfully high on anything.

DOUGLASS: And you didn't really feel that presenting the issue was going to persuade anybody to change?

STIERN: No.

Reapportionment

DOUGLASS: Well, in that same year, '60, we had talked earlier about reapportionment and the problems with the division in the state. This Prop. 15,

Frank Bonelli's [member, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors] plan for reapportionment, had failed on the state ballot. So these were efforts, whether they were correctly written or not, but efforts to solve that problem before you faced the legal ruling.

STIERN: You remember I told you a while back there were elements in the senate, threes and fours and fives, fighting reapportionment of the senate on population so that would never happen and seeking money from lobbyists and industry and commerce and everything to support the status quo as is. "Don't do what [Frank P.] Belotti wants because they are just ambitious assembly people over there. Let's keep it like it is."[1] And on several occasions, I think three occasions, this was on the ballot. Each time it failed. And senators would look at each other and smile and chuckle. And say, "Well, we've got it like we want it, and it's going to stay the same as it is." And the Los Angeles people were saying, "Well, you are still representing rocks, jack rabbits, and trees. And not people." [Laughter] And then, of course, when the Supreme Court made its decision, one

1. Belotti served in the assembly, 1951-1972, representing Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma Counties in varying combinations.

man, one vote, that was the end of that.[1]

California Water Plan

DOUGLASS: Right. That same year, the California Water Plan passed, Prop. 1 on the state ballot. Had you on the Agricultural Committee . . .

STIERN: Worked for that. Yes. I had. Is this a good place to go into the one about how it actually matured?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: Maybe I should tell this story. I want to tell it briefly because I don't want to take a lot of tape and time to tell it, but I want to do it to show how you can live through something that eventually changes in the eyes of history. And, I must say, at this late date, having served twenty-eight years in the legislature, I was active in every part of the State Water Project proposal, I was active, sitting at the table with all the original work, from the very beginning. And yet it is not now perceived in a way that it actually happened.

The situation, to refresh people's memory, was that the northern part of the state had the water, and they didn't want to give it up. The southern part of the state had no water, and they needed water desperately because of the

1. Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186 (1962).

growth in southern California. You must remember, there is no river in the state that flows all year around south of the Kern River in Kern County, a landlocked river that doesn't go to the sea. It starts in the high Sierras, in the Kern plateau, and flows all year around. It's controlled by Isabella Dam today, and by levees for agricultural use purposes. But that's the one river that flows year around. South of there, there are none.

The north was jealous of their future development, thinking that they would need that water for future development. "If we commit ourselves to southern California, we are committed forever." Once you commit toward domestic usage to human beings, you cannot very well pull back out of there. And so they just dug in their heels and fought like Trojans to keep that from happening. And, of course, the south part of the state was trying to do everything they could to get the water.

The Central Valley, which has to be the richest piece of ground in the world, productively speaking, was one of the pawns in this thing. Because if agriculture was to continue in the valley, you needed more water. And, in fact, in Kern County, we were mining water out from underneath Kern County in the

Bakersfield area to the point where we were taking more than was being deposited every year. And that is "writing on the wall," if you don't see that, you are going to be in big trouble. So I went up. The battle cry in Kern County was "Supplement Water Now." There were posters, billboards, signs, everything showing all kinds of desperate situations. Prospectors with no water, and people crawling along on their hands and knees. What was going to happen? Do you want cantelopes in Humboldt County? Do you want cotton to wear in your clothing? Well, okay, we can grow it for you. You can't grow it in Humboldt County. But we need water.

So when I arrived in Sacramento, one of the first things I did, I went to see Senator Hugh Burns, who was the pro tem, from a county very similar to mine, Fresno. And I explained to him that I had felt (and was one of my decisions to run) that if the senators in the Central Valley could come together with something, even only five or six or seven of them, and could come up with some plan that would be acceptable to both segments, the north and the south, maybe we could get the wheel off dead center and get it turning. Well, he heard me out, and he agreed. And he said, "Well, I'm willing to try it. We can do that much."

So we set up a series of luncheons once a week, Wednesday lunch, at the Senator Hotel, on the third floor in a little suite that could be used for meetings like this. And we talked about this until we were blue in the face. One of the interesting things at that moment was that every senator in the San Joaquin Valley was a Democrat, with the exception of one. A man named [J.] Howard Williams, who was the senator from Tulare County, who was a Republican. So Howard Williams and all the rest of these people who were senators from the valley, were there. There was Stiern from Kern. There was [Robert I.] Montgomery from Kings. There was Burns from Fresno. There was Cobey from Merced-Madera. There was [Alan] Short from San Joaquin County. And we were sitting there trying to figure this out.

We were unsuccessful. And, finally, I said to Hugh Burns, "You know, one of our problems may be we need more Republicans in this mix. Especially if we get something out on the floor. So let's think about who we have who would sincerely be good brain material to help us with this problem, who is not from the San Joaquin Valley." We settled on one man whose name was John Murdy, who was the senator from Orange County. John Murdy had gone to the University

of California at Davis and had majored in agriculture. He was a substantial and a big farmer in Orange County. He was a very intelligent man. He was straight arrow and very sterling. He didn't mince around with words. He was a good thinker, and everybody had a great respect for him.

So we asked him if he would sit in with these meetings with us. He said, "Well, sure. He would be happy to. He'd be glad to." And he did. Finally, after not too long, maybe two months or so, he comes up with an idea, and today I don't understand why we didn't think about it ourselves. But one of the problems was how to spell out the financing cost of that project to take water from Shasta and bring it down through the delta and build reservoirs and transmission lines to pump it over the mountains to southern California and continue the lines to Perris and Riverside, while San Diego County, who was getting ahead of itself, was drilling its lines already up to Perris because they wanted to save as much time as they could. How do we do this?

John Murdy said, "Well, why don't we look at the bond route. And why don't we do it with bonds, and that way people can pay for it over the coming decades so that more than one

generation pays for this project. They are the ones who gain. Why should all this be paid for out of one generation at this time? And if you put bonds on the market this way and explain it and what the potential is, for metropolitan use, agricultural use, recreational use, and power use, and that it is being shared over the generations, it might go."

We thought, "Well, that's not a bad idea. And so our next step was we approached O'Melveny and Myers, a law firm in Los Angeles who at that time, anyway, was the expertise in this state on the feasibility of bond issues. And they studied it with the idea that they would confidentially let us know what would happen, suggest a viable way to go. They agreed that bonding was feasible.

Now a strange thing happened. A leak out of that firm gets to Governor Brown's office in Sacramento about what had happened. He didn't even know this committee was meeting. And, all of a sudden, this becomes the Edmund G. Brown Water Act in California. What a wonderful thing this would be! He took credit for the efforts of our working committee.

Well, the next stage was to get something passed through the legislature so we could get it on the ballot, which we did. And which

passed. Not by a big margin. It didn't pass overwhelmingly. It passed, but that was it. And, of course, the figure that was used, as I recall was $960 million, and, of course, that is just a peanut compared to what it was going to cost. But the concept was there.

And the north and the south bought it, and certain concessions were made to the north that appeased them. And one of the people who were the leaders of that was Pauline Davis, the assemblywoman from northern California, who demanded that certain reservoirs be made to serve the areas of the north, a reserve for north state future growth. One of them is called Lake Davis now. [Laughter] And those were committed. And certain things were made that said that if the south didn't take their maximum amounts of water, it could be used by those "filthy rich corporate farmers in Kern County." And I remember what the north did in those battles. One of the things they did was to produce enormous signs showing sections of land in Kern County. Kern County is black and white, like a checkerboard with the black areas showing the corporate farmlands. You can't go through Kern County with that canal without enriching certain people at the expense of others. That was what they were saying. And,

of course, that does happen because we do have big, corporate farms. There are some great big ones in Kern and Kings Counties.

So that's what happened. And that passed on the ballot with commitments made to the north which are sound. One of those commitments is this. I'll tell you because it affects my home county and me very much. The dollar revenues received to pay off the bonds for the Central Valley Project come from metropolitan water for people in cities, agricultural water, recreational use of water, and power. Those four. And there is a thing in that law that says, "If you have a dearth year, like 1977," (1977 was the one that financially hurt us badly, in 1977 we had a drought year) "the commitments to agriculture are considered secondarily and the water needs of metropolitan areas come first." What that is saying, in language that people understand, "Los Angeles County has a Cadillac, and Kern County has a Cadillac. And you got a drought year, the engine burns up on the Cadillac in Los Angeles. You take it out, and you take the engine out of the Kern County Cadillac and put it in the Los Angeles one." People needs are greater than the agricultural needs of any county. That's in there.

And in the 1977 drought year that happened, and we really felt it. Because all these [Laughter] guys thought they were going to get rich by planting grapevines and orchard trees in an area in which there was no water underground. See, in western Kern County, a lot of people don't know this. We could drill five miles down, no water, not at all. So these people go out there and plant grapes, they plant walnuts, and they plant cashews and all that kind of thing. And then, all of a sudden, the engine is taken out of the Kern County Cadillac, and those vineyards and orchards all die. Everything dies. They were told, "Don't do that. Plant annual crops, and let it go at that."

And so the fact that the north was satisfied with that, it passed. Not by a big margin. I don't know what the exact vote was, but if one looked at it, it wasn't great. But as things grew then, it was all built on this concept that you keep selling more bonds for canal development and distribution. The biggest manmade engineering project in the world probably is the California Water Project for transporting enormous amounts of water such enormous distances.

I am going to say this. And it's on tape,

and I really don't care who sees it. But when you go south to get out of Kern County, you must go over the mountains to get to Los Angeles. And the project is arranged so that you take power from the south side of the mountain as the water falls to lift it up on the north side of the mountains to transport it south. The revenues of one help pay for the costs of the other. That part of the project is called Windgap Pumping Plant. When you drive south, you look to the right before you start up the grapevine and you will see about six or eight columns of pipes going up over the mountains, those pipes, that's where the lift begins.

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: A couple of years ago, I am not sure of the exact date, but it seems to me about two years ago or two and a half years ago, a huge celebration was held up on Wheeler Ridge, in which the name of the project was changed and a big sign went up, and this was called the "Governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. Water Project, which is a man-made wonder of the world," and so on and so forth. And what has happened to Senator Murdy, who suggested the bonding concept. Mr. Murdy has become very elderly. He sits in a wheelchair in Orange County, flicking at his face. He didn't get one iota of credit

for that. Like I said, you know, that is so out of character just because he was a Republican and was badly outnumbered on the floor of the senate, doesn't mean he didn't deserve any of that credit.

I can tell you that I sat through every meeting of any importance on the project, and that's the way it worked. And we tied it together by calling it the Burns-Porter Act[1] because Burns was powerful in the senate, and Porter was powerful in the assembly. He was from Los Angeles and a power on the Ways and Means Committee over there. And that's where the name came from, even helping to tie it together that way. Not everybody thought it was the best thing in the world. But the concept did not come from the executive branch. It came from an idea a senator had sitting in our group. I can't tell it to you any more crystal clear than that. And I really am irked when I hear these things are done.

I don't mind giving Pat Brown credit where credit was due. I think he was a reasonable man that you could talk to. And there were a lot of

1. The Burns-Porter Water Bonds Act of 1959, called the California Water Resources Development Bond Act, provided that $1,750,000,000 in bonds for the California Water Plan be presented to the voters in 1960 as Proposition 1, which passed.

things in his regime that he supported and signed and deserves credit for. But that's true of any major move that comes along. There are many people involved in it.

Look, for example. Let's just back up. California State College [Bakersfield]. Did Walt Stiern bring that here? A lot of people think he did. I know I didn't. I know it took votes in committees, fiscal committees, policy committees, floor votes, a governor's signature, coordinating councils, studies on the outside. Arthur Coons, all those people, and on and on and on. There are a lot of people who made that become a reality. You know, I can't stand. . . . People want to do that here. They always want to say, "Well, Walt Stiern brought us this college here in Bakersfield." And on public podiums I often get that, and I counter it. And I say, "You have no idea how many people were involved with this college being here." And, locally, they'll go out and say, "Don't you think the Democrats are a wonderful party in what they did? Pat Brown endorsed it. The only four-year school since 1960 in California is in Kern County. Over Pat Brown's signature. And Walter Stiern got it here for us. Both those two men." Absolutely false. It's not true.

Many people working together brought the college here.

DOUGLASS: It must be some kind of urge for a simple answer to fix a responsibility that people have, without dealing with the complicatedness . . .

STIERN: They want credit for something. They always want to be with a winner, or something.

DOUGLASS: It's a funny kind of bandwagon mentality.

STIERN: But that is the story on that. And Murdy deserves all kinds of credit that he never will receive. You know, he is not going to live too long. And it grieves me that people would do that. You see, change takes places, and new members don't know the history, new legislators don't know about it. People don't remember what was going on in 1950, and what some of the troublesome times were.

VI. GOVERNORS: EDMUND G. "PAT" BROWN AND EDMUND G. "JERRY" BROWN, JR.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we talk about Brown as a governor, Edmund "Pat" Brown. You must have dealt with him sometimes on an individual basis? Or more small group basis? What as he like as governor?

STIERN: Of the governors that I knew and have met, and I had met and knew Goodwin Knight before I was elected to the senate. So I have known Goodwin Knight, Edmund Brown, Sr., Ronald Reagan, Edmund Brown, Jr., and now Deukmejian. And when you

look at that cross section of governors, I think of Pat Brown as being very humanistic. He was a kind of down-to-earth person. You didn't have to wait weeks for a reservation to chat with him in his office. He'd talk to you in the hall.

[End of Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

STIERN: You know, he would meet you in the hall. He'd actually come to your room, into the capitol, if he wanted to tell you something personal.

DOUGLASS: He'd walk up, or go up the elevator, to your room?

STIERN: Sure, he'd come up, "Well, Walt, is this where you hide out." And he'd come on in, and we'd chat. I never have had a governor do that ever. And then, he'd do another thing. He lived in the mansion. And, of course, when he left, Reagan refused to live in the mansion, absolutely flat out refused to live in the mansion. The mansion is a very interesting building, and I can understand why it's an interesting building to live in. I can also see what Reagan didn't like about it too. But Pat Brown used to do this. He used to split the senate up and the assembly up into groups and have them come to the mansion and have dinner with him and Mrs. [Bernice] Brown. There are forty people in the senate, and he would invite

twenty. And then later he would invite another twenty until during each session year he had the whole senate for dinner. And he would invite the assembly the same way. Eighty of them. He could only handle maybe twenty-four at a time or something like that easily.

And he would do that. And then he would open up to open discussion. "Fellows, how do you think I'm doing? This is for you Republican fellows too. Tell me what you think I'm doing that you don't like." And they would talk, and there would be a give and take and back and forth. And the conservative ones would heckle him some, you know, and that was all right. But he was extremely receptive that way. He had a swimming pool put in at the mansion, and he'd have people over to come over to a swimming party, with a little Hawaiian thing.

DOUGLASS: Cabana.

STIERN: Cabana. Invite people over for things like that in more desirable weather. And he would come to your community without a lot of nudging and urging. You didn't have to put money into his fund for reelection to get him to your community.

He was very humanistic. And his wife was very much that way too. And I can remember,

particularly I remember, when I met members of his family, they were very similar. The one person who was different was Edmund Brown, Jr. And I have a picture of Edmund Brown, Jr. that I'll never have out of mind. Which was his father entertaining a group of senators and in the big room where this was done was Edmund Brown, Jr. in his cassock as a student priest, silent, face of stone, didn't say a word. You couldn't talk with him. He wouldn't talk with you. He thought this whole thing was idiocy. Didn't like the way his father operated it, catering to the "power structure" and that kind of thing. Where are the minorities? Where are the poor people? Where are the. . . . A lot of things that he looked at differently than his father did.

And so when the day came that he was elected governor, I remember being up in Independence, California, in Inyo County, one time at a dinner. Pat and his wife came up, and June and I sat next to him at the head table at a town hall meeting up there. I asked him how he thought. . . . I kidded him. I said, "How are you getting along with Governor Jerry? Does he ever listen to his dad?" He says, "Oh, that kid thinks his dad is. . . ." [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Square?

STIERN: And that's exactly the way it was, you know. There was this attitude, and everything was so different. Have you ever been in Jerry Brown's office?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: Inner office.

DOUGLASS: Yes, once.

STIERN: No books on the bookshelf. No flags. Nothing on the desk. "Want to sit down? Sit down on that cushion there on that floor." If you are a lady in formal dress, "right there, that would be a good place for you." A tree with Buddha emblems all over the tree, a worn out rug. You know, in some ways he was eccentric, and, in some ways, he was before his time. I think there are some things he had, that as time goes by, people will pay a little more attention to.

One thing to Jerry's credit. He put more minorities, and I include in that women because they do with these kind of terminologies, than all the rest of the governors of California rolled up into one. He did that. And put them in substantial positions. Department heads. You know, things like that. I have had some very serious talks with him. We are not exactly on the same wave length because of age difference between us.

But, getting back to his father, he would listen to your side of things. Sometimes he would call you down to ask your advice. "I'm being asked to sign this. I know that you voted 'no.' Would tell me what your reasons were?" And he would call a few people down and see what they were doing. It would work both ways. It would work for Democrats and Republicans. And he tried. Some people accused him of acting on the last advice he got. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. And I would not want to say that. But he was searching for advice. And he was willing to wait before he made some decisions. But he is a very homey kind of a person. He's at home in any situation.

And even after he was out as governor, he would come back. I'd see him on occasions. Nothing high-hat about him, you know. He would remember you. And "Weren't those wonderful years we had together, Walt?"

DOUGLASS: He is a very gregarious man, I gather.

STIERN: Right. He is.

DOUGLASS: I heard one story about the Chessman situation that sort of the last time the execution was stayed, and that had happened a couple of times, that the last person who had talked to Edmund, Sr. had understood that he was not going to stay; he was going to let it go, he wasn't going

to make an issue of it. But, again, that this person understood that he went home and young Jerry talked him out of it. That was the last time he stayed it. Did you ever hear that story?

STIERN: No. I've heard rumors like that, but I don't know that any of the stories are correct. I remember it tore him up so because he just had a hard time doing that. Because he took the position that. . . . His basic position was that this is a sick person. This person is mentally ill, and you don't go around executing people because they are ill. And he had an awful hard time getting over that hurdle.

DOUGLASS: How would you rate him as to his skill in terms of . . .

STIERN: Bringing people together?

DOUGLASS: No. Putting forth legislation and dealing with the mechanics of the legislature. You have talked about the human side. It sounds like he tried very much to work with the legislature. Do you think he was a skillful governor, in that sense? Fielding legislation and getting the legislature to . . .

STIERN: He developed some good liaison people to work between his office and the senate and his office and the assembly. And I think that kind of consigned, or kind of relieved, the load somewhat, to make it easier for him or to

broaden his approach to something before he finally got to put his signature on a bill. And he had people who enjoyed working with him and wanted to work with him. His people who were. . . . Particularly his directors of finance were good, solid, strong people who went on and did other great things. [State Director of Finance] Hale Champion was one of those people, who later became head of one of the departments at Harvard. You know, very substantial people that he had faith in, in doing things with.

I think he did a very good job. He came in fairly well prepared to do it, having been a district attorney and a county counsel too, because of San Francisco, then being attorney general, and then coming into this position. As an aside, I think the person most trained to be governor that I can think of is George Deukmejian. It may sound odd from a Democrat talking about a Republican. But there you have a person who serves as a lawyer in prior practice, who came to the assembly for eight years, who came to the senate for eight years, who was eight years attorney general, and who understands the budget and has been through it many times.[1] And now he is governor of

1. Deukmejian's service was: assembly, four years; senate, twelve years; attorney general, four years.

California. And he had more training to be ready for it, in my opinion, than Brown or Reagan or Brown's father or Goodwin Knight. His background is that: does he understand the legislature and the legislative process? Can he read a budget and make sense out of it? And he can. But if you are out of the attorney general's--coming that route--it's a little different.

VII. THE FISHER ACT AND EXECUTIVE REORGANIZATION

The Fisher Act (1961)

DOUGLASS: Well, to go back to the '61 session, one final question was that that year the Fisher Act passed, which upgraded teacher education by requiring subject majors. Did you have any particular experiences you recall, with your committee, on the Fisher bill?

STIERN: Oh, yes. [Laughter] That was a bearcat. And it was a bearcat because of what happened amongst the members of the committee. Senator Hugo Fisher was an outstanding attorney in San Diego County when he came to Sacramento. Out of an historical family, and he was obsessed on something, it turns out, that he just could not let go of. And that was how people promote themselves in the administration of education, without necessarily being the most prepared, the

most ready for it, and getting into key positions that affect a lot of people and a lot of teachers and a lot of faculty and a lot of students. And it shouldn't be that way.

And the idea came up. So the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Donald Grunsky (this man I told you about, from Watsonville), called committee hearings on this subject, and we held them in different parts of the state. We held in them in San Francisco, San Diego, and Los Angeles. Different places. And what we were planning on doing was to develop a committee bill upon which Grunsky and other members of the committee would put their names, a bill relating to teacher credentialing and education in California and determining what standards out-of-staters were expected to meet and everything. And Grunsky went about this in a very thorough, very systematic manner. Everybody talked on the possibility of a fifth year and what that should be, and so forth and so on.

What we never knew was happening was that Hugo was writing his own bill. And he was writing his own bill on this subject and not telling the committee about it. He sat with the committee. He gave every indication that he

might be in agreement with what they were doing. But he was writing his own bill. It was called S.B. 57, I'll never forget the number. [Laughter] And I used to think of it as a real pickle, that number. S.B. 57, the Fisher Act.

And Grunsky was having a bill put through, structured, going through Legislative Counsel's office, having it all fit in the right places in the code and having all that kind of thing. "Pow!," just like that, about ten days before he gets that bill across the desk, Fisher drops his bill into the box on the desk. And you could tell by the number, it's a low number, and he was not letting any ground get away from him under his feet. And he had that dropped in, and the Fisher Act was born.

Well, all hell broke loose all over the state amongst educational and fraternal groups, administrators, colleges, teaching institutions, high schools, and everywhere. And he liked a fight, he loved a fight.

DOUGLASS: Fisher?

STIERN: And he was smart enough that he could take on three or five at a time, you know. He was going to author it. He knew something about what he was talking about. He had studied it a lot. And he really gave them a bad time. People used to come to my office, and say, "My gosh." And I

talked to Grunsky, and I said, "Aren't you sad about this?" And he said, "Yes, I am. I am really sad that he did that. Because the committee bill would have been very, very strong with every member on the committee signing it, both parties, sectionalized all over the state, onto that bill, and a fact-finding thing behind it, and all. And he has done that." Grunsky said, "And in the first form of the Fisher bill put in, there are ten technical mistakes in the bill that the technicians had found." So you start out by repairing a bill.

DOUGLASS: Hastily put together.

STIERN: Supposedly a major bill that has got ten mistakes in it that are serious for starts. And so away we go. Fisher is out of the chute. And he was a very popular man, and he loved to give these dramatic stories about what happens. And I can see what he was talking about. One of them I remember he told about. It illustrates something in my general area, actually it was in Visalia. I remember him almost verbatim, telling about a man who was a physical education major in Visalia. He used to call him a "jock, those guys, you know, they are not even academically oriented, they are athletically oriented." And here this guy sits there, and all he's got is a bachelor's

in education, and he decides he's going to get a doctorate and he is going to go somewhere.

So, every moment he can, he is at Fresno State getting credits, and he gets his master's. And he eventually gets his doctorate. And he comes backing into Visalia, and, all of a sudden, who do they need for a principal for a high school in Visalia, well, here is this guy. He's the only guy with a doctorate whose got all the paraphanelia to do it. So he gets the job. And then, you know, from that point. "Is this what you want your kids to have? Is this what you want your faculty to have? Do you want academic people to have to train under that kind of thing?" Of course, Fisher would illustrate with many, many illustrations that were very sad cases, in different parts of the state.

Well, he was convincing. And he was a very, very close friend of Pat Brown's. I think of all the Democratic senators, probably Pat Brown knew Hugo best and enjoyed him a lot. I think he had known Hugo's father, or something like that. And he signed the bill. It became law. The Fisher Act fell into place.

And I don't want to have to tell you, I am sure you lived through that part, I remember how the educational people felt about that. They just felt that there were parts of that bill

that were absolutely ridiculous and shouldn't be. But they were. And I think that what we had in the form of a committee bill was much broader and much more comprehensive and much more far-viewed in its makeup than Fisher's bill. Because he did his so rapidly, so quickly, and with such haste.

DOUGLASS: So do you feel that some of the Fisher bill glossed over some things?

STIERN: It glossed over some things, and some things are not in it that should be in it. It wasn't as all-encompassing as it probably should have been.

DOUGLASS: So what you are really saying was the committee was fully prepared, had been convinced, was going to do it?

STIERN: We were. We were ready to go.

DOUGLASS: So he grandstanded it.

STIERN: Yes. He just couldn't let the Republican chairman, Donald Grunsky, and his Education Committee have that bill, that concept. And so, you know, in a sense, Brown signed the Fisher bill, you could say that was a Brown bill, you know, as a result of things.

DOUGLASS: Did you get a lot of lobbying from the state colleges people on that bill?

STIERN: Oh, yes. We got heavy lobbying from everybody.

* Hugh P. Donnelly, having succeeded Donald Grunsky, was chairman of the committee in 1961.

And the out-of-staters, who were faced with an extra year, a fifth year. And it came at a time when we were in need of teachers in California. Rather short on them. And it hit a lot of school districts awfully hard. And you had all kinds of bizarre situations where you couldn't meet some of the provisions of the Fisher Act.

DOUGLASS: And have enough teachers.

STIERN: And have enough teachers to run your school. And so Fisher was defeated. And when he was defeated, he was defeated by a man named Jack Schrade, of San Diego County, Brown appointed Fisher to the superior court. So he went right to the superior court in San Diego County.

DOUGLASS: Fisher.

STIERN: And was a superior court judge.

[Interruption]

Reorganization of Executive Branch

DOUGLASS: Then one other thing that happened, and we should move on, is that there was the beginning of a reorganization of the executive branch that apparently Brown was interested in and tried to organize the departments, boards, commissions, and all of that. There had been some attempts before, and, in February of 1961, Brown submitted a proposal to collapse 368 agencies into a few large ones. Were you . . .

STIERN: I wasn't terribly active in that. I remember it

fairly well. This gets back to that thing I was telling you about where governor's don't tinker with the legislative budgets and legislators don't tinker with executive budgets. And he had some ideas of how he could streamline some things, and so he wanted to do that. And so he didn't get a lot of opposition with that. Conservative Republicans thought that was right down their line. We should take a look at that, do that. Democrats that were pro-Pat Brown were willing to go along with him and do that. And he really didn't have a lot of problem with that.

His problem was. . . . You may remember that during Goodwin Knight's regime, Goodwin Knight had what was called a "rainy-day fund." Do you remember that?

DOUGLASS: Right.

STIERN: There was a big to-do about money that he had in a rainy-day fund and not wanting to spend that, and keep that. And when Pat Brown came into office, a lot of that was used with some of the innovations that he wanted to do. And then the question was--it became obvious you had to have an increase in taxes to do some of things that he had envisioned. And that took place.

And, of course, he lost some strength from

doing that. You can't increase taxes without losing some of your strength. Even though people know and were promised and told ahead of time, it hurts. But, anyway, he had some ideas about that. Some of it was advice of the Little Hoover Commission [Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy]. The Little Hoover Commission was created in what year? Am I before myself or am I after myself?

DOUGLASS: I think it was earlier. I believe it was created in 1961.

STIERN: I think part of it was advice from supposedly good people who were looking at the thing in a broad way. He didn't have too much trouble with that. [Commission approved Brown Plan, 1963]

VIII. LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY STIERN (1959-1966)

DOUGLASS: All right. I know that it is hard, in terms of particular bills you may have introduced, I don't quite know how to pick up on that. I trust you will sort of suggest what you recall on bills you sponsored. Why don't we have a go at '62.

STIERN: Let me ask you first. Do you want to leave these major bills now, and now you would want to go to some bills that I thought were important and worked with during this time?

DOUGLASS: Yes. We have now gone from '59 through '61.

STIERN: Let's check off what we did. We talked about that water project. We talked about the Master Plan for Higher Education Act. We talked about the Fisher Act. I think you have to talk about the Rumford Act. That's a major piece of social legislation.

DOUGLASS: Yes. We haven't quite gotten there yet.

STIERN: All right. And we talked about reapportionment and the problems of reapportionment. And we talked about the problems of the politicizing of the two houses.

DOUGLASS: Right. What I was thinking of was particular bills that you introduced. Like there are a whole bunch here on bovine brucellosis. There is a bill here that you sponsored. Things that followed from your committee work.

STIERN: Sure.

DOUGLASS: Which I didn't know . . .

STIERN: What's this all about?

DOUGLASS: Well, or of these, what would you call hallmark kinds of things in your mind that you are particularly proud of? It might help if I just read a few of them.

STIERN: Some of the bills that you carry when you first go in the legislature are bills that your county wants, where you are trying to show cause for and things that they have a problem with.

"Maybe it is a problem of other counties too, and would you carry this bill and see if we can change the situation there?"

DOUGLASS: Right. As I look at '59, you carried, at the request of the Department of Veterans Affairs a number of bills which seemed to be pretty understandable. You had one that you carried, co-authored with Donahoe and Williamson, on public cemetery districts.

Public Cemetery Districts

STIERN: Yes. Let's just go through these to show you an example of small bills which don't have much importance, but become very peculiar, the fact that they are even needed.

One of these was the cemetery. Let's just take a little time with that one to show you how a county gets involved in it.

DOUGLASS: All right. That was S.B. 577.

STIERN: The bill was strange because it was. . . . In eastern Kern County, there is a cemetery district called the Mojave Cemetery District. A cemetery district is supported by the people of that area in which the district is in. Their cemetery was being filled up very fast, and they found that it was being filled up by deceased persons who were not from Kern County. They weren't from the Mojave Cemetery District. They

weren't even from Kern County. In fact, some of them were not even from the state of California and were being brought in from other states. And these people out there were going bananas because they could see their cemetery being filled up. They wouldn't even have any places to place their kin and friends, and something should be done about it. Because when you get buried in a cemetery district, the price is--I forget what it is--so nominal that it doesn't amount to anything.

And this one even had a peculiar joke connected with it. Which was the way I sold the bill. And you are very careful when you talk about the dead and the deceased and things like this. You don't joke around. But I never will forget how I got that bill because I told a story and cracked the committee up, and it took about three minutes to bring them back to order. And when they went to a vote, I had the bill.

But here was what happened. A body was sent from Seattle, Washington to Mojave, California, of a man to be buried in the Mojave District Cemetery. They received the body in Mojave, and they had to bury the body. There was nothing that says that you shouldn't. There is nothing in the law that says that they

shouldn't. And there was this trend that had people shipping remains from other places. And so when I got into this, the Mojave District asked me, "Would you carry a bill and do something about this?" I called the widow of this man in Washington to find out why he had been sent to Mojave, to the district cemetery in Mojave, to be buried. Do you know what she told me?

DOUGLASS; What?

STIERN: She said, "Henry always did want to go to California and never had been there. And so I sent him to Mojave District Cemetery." And so there he was, and they had interred him there. And that's what happened. Well, it's a simple bill, but it was a situation that was being abused all over the state in other counties as well as here. And I told the story about the district and where it was located and all about this thing. And I wound up with my telephone conversation. And one of the committee members said, "I suppose he wanted to have a tree over his grave so it would be shady also." Some silly thing like that. And immediately I found out that there were some seven cemeteries in California that were having this same problem. And there is no point in that. That was a silly thing. An easy thing to get. No problem at

all. A kind of a bill where you are servicing a need in your county. And that is a typical example of that.

DOUGLASS: The bill provided that, in other words, you had to be a resident of the district?

STIERN: Right. Another was the bill I mentioned solving the situation where a candidate dies and you don't have an opponent for the other party. And that solved a situation which helped a lot of counties eventually in other places.

Hearings for Guardian Appointment

DOUGLASS: Here is another one that you sponsored with Donahoe and Williamson. S.B. 977, which had to do with the probate court; appearance of the alleged insane or incompetent persons at hearings for the appointment of a guardian.

STIERN: This bill is a strange bill. It was a bill that affected a lady who was a teacher in the Bakersfield Elementary System. She was a woman who if you met her in a market or a store or a meeting, or anywhere, you would never have run into a more dingy lady in your life, to talk to her. She was really way out, and not there at all. In a classroom, when she was before students, she was fairly straight. And if you had visitors come in, like a principal or a board member or someone, you couldn't find too

much trouble with her. But she was, according to psychologists, at a breaking point. The question was whether you should have a person like that in the classroom.

Well, what do you do with a person like this? There was no way to retire that person. You couldn't retire her. You couldn't take her off the payroll of an elementary school system. And so what they did here, they assigned her to the library, the school library section, and put her in there. Kept her on her regular salary. But she fought this. She wanted to be a classroom teacher, and she wanted to be in the classroom, against all evidence of competent authority, both educational and medical authority, that she was a dangerous person to have in that classroom.

And so when you tried to see how you could retire her, you couldn't. And so what this bill did was to resolve this problem, which was a critical one in the Bakersfield Elementary School System at this moment. Everybody in the system knew about it. And so there is a procedure now of how you can take people out of the classroom and put them legally into some other thing. It might be just testing hearing for children or maybe working in a library. It

was one of those kind of bills to solve a problem.

DOUGLASS: Solve a particular problem.

STIERN: But then, again, it turns out that there are other cases in the state similar to this. It was that type of a bill.

Livestock Remedies and Bees

DOUGLASS: Okay. Let me go just to pick up on more bills. In '61, you introduced a bill amending the Agriculture Code in regard to livestock remedies.

STIERN: [Laughter] Now this gets into real funny business.

DOUGLASS: S.B. 221.

STIERN: [Laughter] There are a couple in here that are kind of strange. But, you know, I am a strange guy, and I was looking at things differently. That one relates to bees. And bees had no category at the time. And bees were being moved all over the state, you know, pollinizing, and there was no control over bees or the use of what you could use on bees for medical treatment. And the reason was because the law talks about cattle, and it talks about livestock, but it doesn't talk about insects. And so if you want to use penicillin or tetramyacine or choramycetine or some kind of drugs to help apiaries that have disease, there

is nothing you can use under the law. And, of course, cattle are cattle. Cattle includes oxen and beef animals, and dairy. It also includes sheep, and it also includes hogs, and poultry. Rabbits are poultry. Did you know that? It's in an act that called the Rabbit and Poultry Act.

And so what I did. I declared that for the purpose of the medication, that bees would be considered livestock. Now you can imagine what that was like. [Laughter] I knew what was going happen, because the [speaker] pro tem in the assembly, who was Carlos Bee, spelled B-E-E, and when I got there, I knew I was going to have something to poke fun at. In the senate and in assembly committees I explained in a professional way that if you were treating apiaries, and that's getting to be big business in California, especially with the pollinations of California crops, the problems we have with toxic sprays and killing bees and curing bee diseases and things like that, it was a necessary and an essential thing to do, to include them in this category, as odd as it may sound.

So I wrote this bill to declare that bees would be considered cattle. Well, everything

went fine until I got to the assembly. And on the floor of the assembly, of course, I can't carry my own bill. I got another member to carry it for me. You know how that works. He stands up, and he presents the bill. But just as he stands up and start out, everybody in that room goes "bzzzz." [Laughter] Carlos Bee was in the chair. The bill was passed. And beemen were happy to get it because of what it did to help them. It didn't impair anybody to do it that way, on the basis of restricting it to the purposes of medication.

Egg Marketing Standards

The other ones. I have one on eggs there that you listed. Now, this one is a very interesting one. And this was one that, gosh, that tagged me for years. In the first place, I lost the bill the first time I went through on the bill. And the bill seemed so right to me that I could not believe that I would lose it. One general statement I can make is that sometimes, as in my case, the man who knows the most about a situation can lose the bill because nobody else understands it, and you can't convince them. I became aware of the fact that in California that incubated reject eggs could be used for human consumption. Now we are talking about eggs that go into the incubator to

hatch chicks, be they turkeys or chickens (in chickens it's a case of twenty-one days and they hatch). Any egg that didn't hatch that came out of that incubator could be used for human consumption.

To a veterinarian, that is as appalling as saying you should take hemlock to pep yourself up for breakfast. Because those eggs are usually full of molds, they are full of blood clots, they are green-gray, they are cracked. There is something wrong with them. And those were being taken and placed into mayonnaise and salad dressing in California. If I took my wife to the Senator Hotel for dinner in those days, I might very well have that kind of an egg placed on a salad in a dressing that she was going to be eating. And I knew, as a veterinarian, using chick embryo as a media in the laboratory, how fast organisms grow. This was really wrong.

So I took this bill to the senate. And I explained it in great detail. "We're not hurting anybody here. You can boil it. You can put it under pressure. You can put it into dog food. You can sell it to fish hatcheries for baby fish food. You can use it to make buttons out of. There are a lot of things that you could do with the product. But not for human

consumption in California." I got that bill out of the Ag Committee. I got that out of the Finance Committee. I got that across the senate floor. I went to the Assembly Agriculture Committee, and I lost the bill there. These people were saying, "Well, these poor chicken farmers, they are not doing very well. They are not making very much money. And you are taking a form of livelihood away from them." I said, "No, I'm not. They amortize the losses over every baby chick that comes out alive that they are going to retail. When they sell, they are going to include all their costs, and then they can use these rejects for other purposes. But I lost the bill. The point is I lost the bill. They wouldn't buy it.

DOUGLASS: This was S.B. 489. It was in the '63 session, I have.

STIERN: The '63 session? I think it was.

DOUGLASS: Yes. The senate passed, and the assembly, no further action, egg products.

STIERN: Yes. There was another egg bill that had to do with eggs that were cracked. What percent of cracked eggs could go through a retail 1/2-egg [dozen] carton. I am not sure which one of those numbers is which.

But, continuing with this, the next year I said to myself, "How am I going to get this

doggoned thing through on this bill with these incubator reject eggs. I know that's so wrong. And no medical person in the world would stand by and say it was right. Who would want to eat that kind of stuff?"

So what I did. I used color photographs. I followed a Chinese method (one picture is worth a thousand words) and also broke some of these eggs out onto paper plates so they could see what they looked like. "This is what an egg looks like with a partially formed chick in it, with blood clots in it, with molds in it, with funguses in it. These are the gray ones, and these are the green ones. And these are the blue-green ones, and these are the pink ones. And these are the orange ones. Now this is what we are talking about." And when I presented it, I passed the cracked eggs and these pictures around the committee. Well, it was just before lunchtime. I thought these guys were going to. . . . And I got the bill out of that committee, and it went on and was signed into law in California. There are none of those eggs on the market today.

These are some of the things that carry over. You see, there was a day when I was buying eggs, six hundred crates to the railroad

car, for the military. And breaking out eggs and selling them frozen and moving them to Murmansk. And I had a lot of background on eggs. I knew I knew more about eggs than anybody up there in the legislature.

Some of the older friends of mine used to talk to me about. . . . You know, the subject of eggs would come up, they would say, "Do you remember Walt's first egg bill that he had up here." [Laughter] [S.B. 1051, 1963 session]

Meat Inspection

DOUGLASS: Well, I think this coincides with your taking over the chairmanship, just about, of the Public Health and Safety Committee. Because you were chairman from '63 to '66. And '63 is when a couple of these bills were. You also had bills on meat inspection.

STIERN: On meat inspection, we did. The meat inspection bills were these. And meat inspection has changed a lot since then to what it is today. Meat inspection is not really good even today in California. But the meat inspection was done by state meat inspectors or federal meat inspectors or no meat inspectors at all.

And what we had in California was a situation where people would go around, and they would sell the Douglass family an eight-month-

old calf or a ten-month-old calf. And then they would custom-dress it out in your backyard. They would have a tripod, and they would dress it out. And they would take the skin off of it, and eviscerate it and custom cut it up any way you wanted. Or a farmer could take his cow to market to sell to a butcher. As long as he left the skin on the carcass, he could sell that to the meat market. And the butcher could butcher that out and sell it to you. Now you don't know whether it's got tuberculosis or anything about it at all. It could have brucellosis. It could have any one of a number of diseases, and you would have no way of knowing that at all.

Well, to a veterinarian who had done an enormous amount of meat inspections, that's wrong. Because by the lymph nodes you can determined what's wrong with different parts of carcasses, and we usually condemn or pass, depending on what the situation is. So I carried that bill. And, of course, that gets all the backyard custom butchers down on you. And gets a lot of farmers down on you who want to sell this kind of thing. [S.B. 1132, 1961 session]

Along with that, was a brucellosis bill. The disease is serious enough that we had to develop

some kind of a condemnation of animals that were infected with this disease. And so we kind of followed what we had done with tuberculosis, and we evaluated an animal. You are a farmer. You have a cow that's worth, say in those days, $300. If the animal is tested and it was a positive reaction to brucellosis, then you had to brand it on the face with a "B" so that it wouldn't get mixed up with healthy cattle, as you brand with "T" for tuberculosis. And then you estimate the value of the animal. The federal government would pay $100, the state would pay $100, and you take $100 shellacking yourself, as the owner of the animal. That was the one that touches on brucellosis.

DOUGLASS: Yes. That's S.B. 1132, 1961 session.

STIERN: To some people, that's not much of a bill. But if you are in the business, cattle business, and if you are in the dairy business, it can be an exciting bill. And especially today, where people are getting more and more conscious of salmonella and the problems of that.

To me, one of the things that is one of the most important aspects of veterinary medicine is preventing disease of animals from becoming diseases of human beings. And these are diseases that transmit. And so I played the part of the veterinarian. I spoke out on that

kind of thing.

Tuberculosis Screening--School Personnel

I've got a bill I want to talk to you about, on tuberculosis in here. Because it's kind of an interesting bill. I am not sure just what year it came. It seems to me it was around '65, '66. It was on tuberculosis. [A.B. 1111, 1961] Some of these just say the number, the code number, and tuberculosis. To me, it's a major bill that I am proud of. And I want to touch on it.

I learned that--I was shocked to learn, as a veterinarian--that a person could be a school teacher or a school employee or work with school students at any level, kindergarten to college, and be an active tubercular. You could be loaded with tuberculosis and still schools could not remove them from a position of being around children.

And so the first thing I did, I located four or five examples of where this had happened, just to show how bad this had become. And, secondly, I put in this bill that says that unless you could prove that you were negative to tuberculosis, you could not teach in a classroom or be a teacher or work in a school cafeteria or do a lot of things that you shouldn't be doing.

Well, there was a teacher at Sacramento

State [College] who died just wreaking of tuberculosis. On autopsy, she was more tuberculosis than she was normal tissue. But she taught a full lifespan at that school. And she had tuberculosis, and you could not dismiss her. A principal in San Luis Obispo County had a secretary who was a tubercular, and she was in the same category. And a teacher in a school in Los Angeles County, called Betsy Ross Elementary School, had a teacher that was a music teacher, a singing teacher, and she was a tubercular. And you couldn't get her out of the classroom. And the reason for this was that the law said in California: if it is against the tenets of a person's faith to be tested for tuberculosis, you do not test that person. And when I did this, I saw this, I thought, "This is ridiculous because in veterinary medicine, all cattle are tested periodically for tuberculosis. And if they have it, you remove them from the rest of the cattle. Shouldn't our children have equal protection?"

[End of Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

STIERN: When I saw this, I put in a bill which said that unless you were tested, either by X ray or by endodermal test or by one of the accepted methods of testing and shown to be negative to

tuberculosis, you couldn't be a classified or a certificated employee.

Senator Donald Grunsky who was chairman of the Education Committee, he said, "Good luck, Walter. I carried a bill like this four years ago, and I didn't even get off the ground.." He said, "You'll find that people like Christian Scientists, and people who believe in Unity and people who have certain religious convictions will fight you on this. Not only that, but the legislature historically has respected people's religious beliefs." And he said, "You are going to have high-powered lawyers from Boston out here all over you on this cause because I know. I had that happen." And I said, "Well, Donald, it's wrong. I just can't believe that you would want a person singing 'Let freedom ring!,' a teacher singing and the moisture from her breath going out contaminating people with brucelosis bacilli. I can't believe that that is right. That is really wrong. If they want to do that, they had better find some other job than being in a classroom."

Well, anyway. I'm trying to make a long story short. But I put the bill in. And, of course, what happened, it attracted a lot of attention. And, sure enough, just like Donald

Grunsky had said, that when the time for the bill to come up before the hearing, I had a man come out from Boston who was a high-powered attorney with the Christian Science Church. A very intelligent guy. And he came out to see me and begging me to withraw this bill. "Don't do this. Please don't do this."

Well, one of the members of the committee was in the same boat. One of the members of the committee had a wife who was a Christian Scientist. He told me that he couldn't support it because his wife didn't want him to, and he wasn't going to support the bill. And that he was going to have to listen to this man who came out from Boston and what he had to say.

So now comes an interesting situation. It's one of the strangest things I have think I've been in, in a bill of this type. Because it shows all the different intrigue that it gets involved in. How a bill dies or how a bill passes. And I said to him. . . . He said, "Why would you want to pass a bill like this?" And I said, "Because I think that it is wrong to expose children coming to school in a compulsory manner to people who are known to be tubercular and will admit it." "Well," he said, "it's an infringement on the rights of people's

religion," and so forth and so forth and goes on and on. I remember being very graphic about it. I had a glass on my desk, and I said, "I'm going to put a glass down here. That's full of milk. And I want you to know that I took it from a tubercular cow. Would you drink it?" And he said, "No. I wouldn't drink it." And I said, "Why wouldn't you drink it?" And he said, "I wouldn't jump in front of a Mack truck that was coming down the street either." And I said, "Okay. Fine. I think I get the answer to that." I thought of different ways of trying to find out. I thought, "How am I going to curb this guy? How am I going to keep him from being before the committee or saying what he is going to say."

And just by chance. You know, he was about my age. He got into some other things and wanted to know if I had ever been in the military service, and I said, "Yes, I had been." I said, "Have you ever been in the military service?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "When did you get out?" And he told me. And I said, "How did you get out?" He said, "Well, I was medically discharged." I said, "You were medically discharged?" He said, "Yes. I was medically discharged from the army." I said, "You mean to tell me that you are drawing

compensation on a medical discharge from the United States Army and you are a Christian Scientist?" And he said, "Yes, I am."

I said, "Let me tell you something. And I mean every word I'm telling you. You just happen to be talking to somebody who had a lot of military service. And my office was always in the infirmary and in the hospital. And when you go through the procedure for a medical discharge, I know what's required. Which includes a chest X ray. And you got a chest X ray, and you also got an endodermal test for tuberculosis and you got a lot of other things before you went out. If you didn't, you don't have a medical discharge from the United States Army and you tell me you have one." He says, "I have got one." And I says, "I want to tell you something. You are a prostitute." I never will forget his face when I told him that. He said, "What do you mean." He was all shaken up. And I said, "You are taking money under false pretense. You are sailing under the flag that you are a Christian Scientist. You don't believe in X ray, you don't believe in endodermal, all these things. And you are going to go in there and expose me in front of that committee tomorrow. If you do, I am going to

tell in detail to that committee how a person gets out on a medical discharge and that you have admitted to me that you have one. And you are going to say in front of that committee, 'Yes, I have one.' or 'No, I don't.'" And I said, "If you go in there and open your mouth, that's what I am going to do." He was in shock. You know, that wasn't what he was sent out here from Boston to do.

Well, we went before the committee. And the bill came up, and I explained the bill and why I felt that is wrong and the medical aspects of the thing. And I said, "I know there are people who disagree, and I know some people have religious feelings against this. But we are talking about the vast majority of people in California. We are not talking about segments. They can change and teach in private schools or do other jobs." This guy didn't even get out of his chair. And he sat in the front row there, ready to testify. He sat there. And I said, "Now there may be people here who want to testify against this bill. I understand there are people who might." And I turned and looked at him like this. And he just sat there. And he never even got up. And not one word was said about Christian Science or anything about that in this thing. And he kept his mouth shut. And

that bill went sailing out of that committee. It went all the way. It was signed by the governor. It's a law on the books in California today.

But what I am telling you is sometimes the reason a bill is signed and becomes law, or doesn't become, is a remote, remote possibility.

DOUGLASS: I found a bill here in 1965 which probably isn't the same bill, but it was S.B. 608 to amend the Health and Safety Code with regard to sanitation and health requirements for restaurants, itinerant restaurants, vehicles, and vending machines. So you are talking about another bill besides this one.

Sanitation Standards for Farm Labor

STIERN: That's another bill altogether. There is another interesting little bill that has never been enforced. That's the other thing. You can pass good legislation, and nobody enforces it. One of those has to do with my indignation.

I got myself into plenty of trouble with this, because it was just something I believe in. I don't know if you know it or not, but when you talk about agricultural workers working in the fields, I don't know if you are aware of the fact that at that time women agricultural workers had to defecate and urinate and take

care of themselves in the fields right out in front of men in the fields. There were no portable toilets or anything like that. And that's the way it was. And I couldn't believe that it was as bad as it was. There was also no handwashing facilities. Nothing requiring that. So I carried a bill [A.B. 1102, 1965] that required that for every so many workers in the field and so much area you had to have portable toilets and a handwashing facilities thing. And that passed early on. Boy, were the farmers mad at me. They were furious that they had pay for that kind of thing. "What are you? A Cesar Chavez person." And so on and so forth.

I said, "No. I just wouldn't want my wife in the same circumstances, and I feel for other people whose wives are out there in those kind of circumstances. Let alone it being terribly unsanitary to have raw sewage in a field, in a lettuce patch or other things that don't get cooked." And so I went after that, and I got that bill passed. Do you know, to this day that bill has never been enforced. And every time I go to the Health Department and say, "Why are you not enforcing this bill?" they say, "Well, we don't have the money to do it. We don't have the people to go out and inspect to check things out. And we are just short of funds, and it is

not possible to do that." The reason I thought of this was because I saw a situation and I checked it out. And I found it that it was just exactly like the day that I conceived of passing this bill.

And so you can get good bills passed that should be passed for public health reasons. If for no other reason than modesty and the fact of common decency to human beings, to have portable toilets and handwashing facilities," but it just doesn't get done. Knowing that, how did you like the salad made out of romaine and things that are not cooked at all. And people handling themselves and no handwashing facilities, taking care of themselves. It's horrible, really. So it costs a few pennies to do it.

DOUGLASS: I think I found that bill. It was S.B. 1396, in 1963, Health and Safety Code, re farm labor centers. Would that be it? It was passed.

STIERN: Concerning farm labor centers?

DOUGLASS: Yes. All I had on it was farm labor centers. But it was an amendment to the Health and Safety Code, adding a part, Part 7, to Division 24 of the Health and Safety Code with regard to farm labor centers. And it went to the Committee on Health and Safety and was passed by the legislature.

STIERN: I'll have to look that up. I am a bit fuzzy on that.

Community Colleges

DOUGLASS: All right. Let me just ask one question too here. During this period, from the very beginning on, you seemed to be carrying bills dealing with the junior colleges.

STIERN: Yes. I got very involved in that. The reason for it is that basically, not being a good student in high school, [Laughter] and like I told you, I was always younger than everybody else and I was always trying to catch up. When I got through with four years of high school, I didn't have the grades to get into the university. I had had trouble with mathematics, and I had to do some makeup work. I did that in community college. And have always had a dedication to community colleges because of that, thinking about how many kids that they take who are late bloomers or not ready for university or for some reason can be salvaged or can go on, but if it hadn't been for a community college that was able to have me do my makeup on it, I couldn't have gone on to a respectable university or college. And so I stayed a year going to Bakersfield College, and I took extra courses that satisfied my deficiencies if I went to Washington State University.

And I have always had a warm place in my heart for that because I have known a lot of people who went that route. Either because of economics, they couldn't go on, or for whatever reason, or whether it was a situation like mine. And it looked to me like a tremendous stepping stone to get them started. Or for families, minority families, that had never had a member of their family put a foot on a college campus of any kind. You know, Hispanic kids could go to community college to get started. If they have got any spunk or anything about them, there are scholarships, there are ways of working, there are grants. There are a lot of things they can do. And I got to looking at that.

And then from the fact that community colleges from the time of the Master Plan [for Higher Education, 1960] genesis was carrying 73 percent of the college freshmen and sophomores in California was a little much. And so I pitched in. And I have two bills--I can't remember their numbers--they are both capital outlay campus construction bills utilizing bond monies. And what they say is this: "For every dollar that you put up for a campus site and for building, the state will match it with a dollar." People are great for hanging tombstone

names on bills. People wanted to call it the Stiern Act. I said, "No." I don't have a single bill. . . . You won't find a bill in twenty-eight years that carries my name, because I would not allow it to happen. I don't think that they should be on there. And I don't think that the language should be encumbered with all the language of the authors who get on there and three and four try to get their name in front of the public. And I just shunned that. But some people call it the Stiern Act anyway, although it is not in the language. And that's what it says. It says, "When you need more sites and you need more building, the state will match dollar for dollar, and it will be done by bond money."

And there were the two bond issues which I shepherded through both houses, put on the ballot, talked to the point, and I moved around the state, talking about it. They passed and were a tremendous nudge and help for community colleges, from the smallest of them to the largest of them.

DOUGLASS: I think I found that one. It was in '65, S.B. 1521, which added a section to the Education Code with regard to junior college facilities.

STIERN: That's right. It probably is the one. And there were two of them, two bills that did that.

And that got me started.

DOUGLASS: Yes. There was an S.B. 318, which was with regard to junior college construction, making an appropriation with urgency.

STIERN: Right. Then when I got into that, I read something about the University of Ohio, who had done something with bonds in order to build buildings on their campuses for other than instructional purposes. And I put that bill in, and I got that. And that bill says that the state can issue bonds for things like dormitories for junior colleges, parking lots, student unions for junior colleges which produce revenues. Revenue-producing bonds for community colleges was a new concept at that time. And I used that Ohio example to do it so that if you could produce revenue from the building, you could go for bonds to do it and finance it and do it in an orderly fashion.

And then I get off on that, and the next thing you know I was interested in who speaks for community colleges. And that got to be an indelible thing in my mind. Who speaks for community colleges? And it was really strange, who speaks for community colleges. Because you had everything from a man (and I use him not in a derogatory way but I champion him really) who

was the president of the College of San Mateo, who did gamesmanship of getting money for San Mateo. His name was [Julio L.] Bortolazzo. He was able to get money for San Mateo College and develop a second campus and kept on taking care of their needs. Where at the same time, Imperial College, down in Imperial Valley, was bumping along on retread tires and hitting every bump in the road and not knowing where the danger spots were and having an awful time even existing. Of course, they didn't have anybody to go to Sacramento to talk on their behalf. Bortolazzo did, and he talked at lot. And he got a lot of federal and a lot of state money and a lot of things for his college.

And so the question--who speaks for community colleges? When you look at all of them, they are so different. They are multi-campus, some of them are. Some of them are what are called small, necessary colleges, like Barstow and Taft and West Valley out by Coalinga and places like that. There ought to be some rhyme or reason on the way they were run.

So then came the idea or the concept of a board of governors who would speak for all community colleges. And I carried that legislation, and that's my legislation.

DOUGLASS: Yes. That, I think, was S.B. 367, in 1967, in

which you amended the Education Code with regard to higher education. I believe that is the one that established the separate board. Does that sound right?

STIERN: It is right.

DOUGLASS: I was having trouble finding the bill.

STIERN: Because my idea was that the big ones, the successful ones, the ones with money, the ones that had succeeded, should lend a hand to the smaller ones that who were struggling.

DOUGLASS: So they needed to be talking to each other and have a central headquarters.

STIERN: Sure. And know how you do this. Or help them along a little bit. It was going be a system because there were transfer students going from here to there. Why not give them as much help as you possibly could.

DOUGLASS: So you rounded out the total structure. You now had the UC Regents, the California State University Board, and then this.

STIERN: That's right. It was partly a spinoff of the Master Plan ideas. And so we got into that.

And then there was another one there. Let's see. With community colleges. Oh, I remember it because it was such a strange, strange one. The question that came up. How small a college can a college be and still be of

value to exist? If you don't have over so many students in the area, should you build a community college? A case in hand would be Bishop. Bishop never has enough really to have its own community college.

But there was a man who was a faculty person at Ventura College who decided he wanted to be a college president. And he sat down, and he decided he was going to be a college president. He told me. He said, "I want to be a college president." And then he said, "I am going to make a college." And he did. And he went over to Blythe, California, and he got a lot of old buildings from the air force that had been used in training fields out on the desert. Brought them all together in Blythe in a valley, Palo Verde Valley. And he put that together. And he'd get some teachers to teach, and he is going to have a college. And he is going to have a football team, and he is going to have everything. And here he is three miles from the Arizona line. Well, you know what happened. Most of his kids were from Arizona. And so we said, "How about Arizona helping support this college?" Arizona said, "Oh, no." The legislature backed off, "We don't want to do that," although two-thirds of the kids in the school are from Arizona. So he thinks he's got

a football team. He brings some guys out from Pittsburgh, and he puts it on the schedule to play Reedley College. And Reedley College is no big shakes in athletics. And Reedley devours them, like 70 to 0. [Laughter]

And, finally, I said, "I don't see the logic of an existence of a college that close to the border. If the students aren't there to back it up, I don't think that the citizens of the area should have to support a college. Your curriculum is weak. You can't have much there." Well, I wound up with a bill to charge out-of-state tuition, and I went before the Finance Committee with this. And, of course, the Finance Committee just took this man apart when he opposed my bill, fearful he would lose his Arizona students. You know, he had no background for being a president of anything. He just wanted to be a president of a college, be called president so-and-so. And he was going to president of Palo Verde College.

DOUGLASS: Yes. Self-declared.

STIERN: [Laughter] I think at this time there is a Palo Verde College, but the situation is different twenty years later, you know.

DOUGLASS: This is a bill here that you did introduce in '63 that passed on nonresidency of junior

colleges.

STIERN: That was an interesting one because it was so peculiar. That was one where you hear something, and you wonder how many times can you multiply this. I had a boy come to visit me here in Bakersfield. We were out of session. And he came and saw me and said, "I want to be a veterinarian." And he said, "I want to go to Bakersfield College. Can you tell me all the ins and outs and how I track on through to get into the Davis School of Veterinary Medicine?"

So I said to him--you know these are just things that you stumble on--"Do you go to school now?" "Oh, yes. I'm in Bakersfield College." I said, "Where is your residence?" Well, he hesitated and he said, "I live with my aunt and my uncle." I said, "Where do they live?" He said, "Here in Bakersfield." I said, "You go to Bakersfield College?" He said, "Yes." "Fine," I said, "I know boys who have gone through Bakersfield College who have gone to Davis to become veterinarians." I said, "Where is your residence? Where do your parents live?" He said, "British Columbia." And I said, "Not only out of state, but outside the United States!" And here he is in a core going into a community college, supported with community funds. Then, on my next question, "What does your father do

for a living?" "He is a full commander in the Royal Canadian Navy."

Then my brain bank said, "How many kids are there in this category in California? And the fact that they are sitting where they sit, eliminates some Californian from that seat." And I am talking about especially things like Art, you know. And looking at state colleges, as well as community colleges.

And so I carried this bill which eliminated that. He had to come in as an out-of-state student, just like any other out-of-state student. But you tell me why a student from Arizona should pay out-of-state tuition to go to a school like Bakersfield College when a boy from British Columbia doesn't have to. It doesn't make sense. So it is one of those things. You don't know how far it travels and what's involved. But you pick upon these things this way.

DOUGLASS: That was S.B. 647, in 1963.

[End of Session 1, May 28, 1987]

[End of Tape 4, Side A]

[Session 2, June 4, 1987]

[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

DOUGLASS: Senator Stiern, you mentioned in the last interview that you thought 1966 was a watershed

year in the history of the legislature. I presume that is probably because it went to the unrestricted sessions and the full-time legislature, plus you had a reapportionment that year which affected the next year's election. Have I hit those reasons? Have I left something out?

STIERN: Yes. And the fact that there was a migration of assemblymen coming into the senate who already had political bases and organizations and war chests and things all set up. I wasn't expecting that, but that's what happened. And it's logical because they were all keyed for it. And, also, they had tried hard to get four-year terms in the assembly, and they had failed to do that. And this gave them a chance of only having to go half as often to election battles.

IX. SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Activities and Interests of Members

DOUGLASS: I would like to talk a little bit about education in this period. One is the makeup of the Senate Education Committee. George Miller, Jr. was chair of that committee. That is correct, I believe, at that time?

STIERN: Of the Education Committee?

DOUGLASS: In the senate.

STIERN: No. He was chairman of the Finance Committee. The Education Commmittee was chaired by. . . . It's chaired now by [Gary] Hart and before Hart, it was chaired by. . . . Let's see.

DOUGLASS: Well, Rodda was chairman in 1967.

STIERN: Rodda. Before Rodda, it was Donald Grunsky [beginning in 1963] from Watsonville. And then maybe before that, before I got there, maybe another one. [Hugh Donnelly was chairman in 1959 when Senator Stiern entered the senate.]

DOUGLASS: All right. This was something I picked up on in that Miller, at least, was unhappy about what he thought was a CTA-administrator [California Teachers Association] alliance that functioned.

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: And Grunsky, I guess, was considered the CTA . . .

STIERN: Spokesperson.

DOUGLASS: Spokesperson. I was interested in your view of all of that.

STIERN: What is interesting about that episode is this. There was a continual rivalry in the senate between Miller and Grunsky. It was a fun thing. They enjoyed each other. They both had good minds. Their philosophies were different. And they were on opposite sides--the very opposite sides of the room--they couldn't have been farther apart, Grunsky, sitting in front on the

left side, had a corner seat and Miller on the back right on a corner seat, in the senate. And they would pound on each other all the time. They both had good minds, and it was fun to watch them.

DOUGLASS: So it wasn't a vindictive, nasty thing.

STIERN: No. It was difference of philosophy. And Grunsky was a CTA-minded person, and he would listen very much to what they said. And then he would consider their expertise and what they had at Burlingame (location of CTA headquarters) and their research and everything as being of great value, and he placed values to that, that Miller didn't place to it. And the thing went well because the legislative advocate of CTA, he was just wheeling and dealing and doing very well for education, working with Grunsky.

But then comes the AFT [American Federation of Teachers] about that time. As I recall, their nucleus came out of the Long Beach area, to start. And they came up with a person as an advocate also, who wasn't listened to very much for the first, I'd say, one to three years. And then a strange thing happened.

DOUGLASS: Now an advocate in the senate? Or a lobbyist?

STIERN: A lobbyist. I used the name advocate instead of lobbyist. And that was as an AFT, AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of

Industrial Organizations] kind of operation of the teacher's union.

DOUGLASS: Who was that who represented them? Do you recall? And who represented CTA? Do you recall that?

STIERN: I'd have to think about it a little bit, but we can get that. And in the case of the CTA man, he became ill with cancer, some debilitating disease, and it slowed him down tremendously. And during that time, the man who was representing AFT, just in training at what he was doing, just advanced tremendously. And so, all of a sudden, committees were faced with two sides. And they were not in agreement necessarily.

And so then they would find there were reasons why the AFT people had their point of view. And as collective bargaining came on more and more with education and that type of thing, these people came into focus more. So the CTA person faded a little bit. You know, they replaced that man and had other people, but by that time, AFT had a pretty strong hold and they were really developed.

DOUGLASS: So you were hearing more of the non-establishment viewpoint from the AFT?

STIERN: Miller was more an AFL-CIO person, coming out of Contra Costa [County], with all the oil

refineries and everything else in his district, and the longshoreman's union, and all that kind of thing. And Grunsky was more business, professionally oriented to the point where he liked to think of education not being involved with the unions and that type of thing, but was more of a professional type thing that should be dealt with. And so that was very strong between those two men who carried those two different banners.

DOUGLASS: Now from what I have read, I gather that about this time, '66, the balance had switched to the point that Miller maybe had gained more support for the nonadministrative viewpoint. Where did you fall in this situation?

STIERN: Well, I respected both of their abilities in what they were trying to do. My district was not heavy in unionization. I was really troubled with my personal feeling that I didn't really like seeing unionization coming into schools. It seemed to me that if teaching was a profession, it was a strange thing to mix it up with typical union activities that I thought of oil field unions and construction unions and that type of thing. I resisted personally, my personal feeling, of wanting teaching and strikes and all that kind to get going in schools. Because I think there are certain

places where you shouldn't have strikes. And it still annoys me terribly. I dot think we should have strikes in law enforcement. I don't think we should have strikes in health services, and I don't think you should have strikes in public education, where you affect the lives of many, many children while adults are trying to work these kind of things out. I never have been terribly, terribly strong in that area.

And so I was really torn a lot by this. Because I respected Miller and what he was trying to do. At the same time, I liked the professionalism of Grunsky and what he was trying to do. And I really worked with both lobbyists of both groups quite well, I was being educated as well as developing more and more interest as this thing was coming. It was obvious that it was coming into focus into California. It was going to be a factor.

DOUGLASS: Aren't there almost two questions here? It's interesting. One clearly is the unionization of the teaching profession, as contrasted to the representatives of the administrative-CTA types. And Unruh was certainly involved with the unions, the teacher's unions. At least he seemed to have support from that group.

STIERN: And so was Senator Albert Rodda, because he

himself was an educator and a college instructor and chaired the Education Committee and then the Finance Committee. Many, many of the things that were done under unionization of schools were done with Rodda's direction. And he's such a mild-mannered person. Not a terribly, terribly aggressive person. It was amazing what he was able to do.

DOUGLASS: But, to finish my question, in a way which was a double-edged one, were there other questions you saw as important to address that involved not just union versus CTA, but questions that applied to the classroom teacher's position as contrasted to what the principal or administrative staff looked at. Real questions of educational philosophy and policy that really didn't necessarily have anything to do with whether you were pro-union or anti-union? Did this cut through this discussion too, if you follow me? In other words, when you hear from a professional group that is very highly organized, like CTA, you may be hearing a filtered viewpoint, as contrasted to what the classroom teacher actually may need to have happen. Was that part of this discussion?

STIERN: Yes, it was. And I have to admit that, as we went through those years, I was deeply, deeply troubled by that. Because I couldn't see how

you let teachers take over a system which is built in California around boards of education as elected by the people, who employ superintendents and staff, administration, and then try to develop their school system. Then to have the teachers turn around and be able to turn that thing topsy-turvy and upside down because of their zeal as far as striking, if necessary. And it just seemed wrong to me. And my thinking was really reflected because Kern is really a very, very conservative area. Kern, in my opinion, is a more conservative area than Orange [County]. A lot of people are not as aware of that. But it really is. Orange is a conservative area, but Kern is extremely conservative, and made up of many, many small places.

And yet I could see the inequities of it. I could see where a school board of five people sat there for year after year after year and wouldn't give tenure to a good teacher. And just have turnover after turnover after turnover. And not to the help or the aid or the benefit of the children in the schools, but just because they didn't want tenured teachers.

DOUGLASS: That's right. They would come up against the three years and then throw them out.

STIERN: Exactly. I could see the wrongness of that, and why teachers would fight that and oppose that. But, by the same token, I don't know that you should let the teachers take over the system, which is a public school system supported by those people who go to the polls and elect people to run their schools and send people to Sacramento to find finance for those schools.

DOUGLASS: Did the committee tend to vote in blocs? I assume that Senator Farr. . . . Was their a group that sort of supported Miller and a group that supported Grunsky?

STIEN: Yes, they did. They broke down into those kind of things. Fisher was involved there, in the Fisher Act. Fisher would tend to be, was in, the Miller group, as an example, and those reflections came out of that. They were active. Of course, Rodda seemed like such a mild-mannered man, you can't think of him as being a powerhouse in this area. But if you go back and look at the bills, who was the person carrying those bills? Rodda carried 80 percent of them in the senate. And in a mild-mannered kind of way, he shoehorned an awful lot of things through that he believed in which were Miller concepts.

DOUGLASS: How about Senator Farr?

STIERN: Farr is a very interesting man in that he is one

of those people that is unique and different and a loner in many ways, and yet he was an environmentalist and he came out of the Carmel-Monterey area. He took a lot of teasing from the leadership in the senate as being a "posey-picker," as they would call him.

DOUGLASS: Yes. I remember you said that.

STIERN: And yet he would stand by his own guns. And it was interesting that even in the thing that we talked about before on the capital punishment bill, it was his name that was the lead name on that bill.

DOUGLASS: But where did he fall in the Education Committee?

STIERN: He was a friend of Miller's, and he was helpful to Miller.

School Unification

DOUGLASS: I wanted to ask a specific question, because I think you saw a reference to it in the notes I sent you, on school district unification. At the hearings, at the Senate Education Committee, you and Unruh had a little exchange about unification. And I would be interested in your explicating on that.

STIERN: Well, this is an interesting thing. To me, it is one of the things that also shows how strong people can be in doing what they want to do in

their own community. When that act was passed--you know, a law is a law in California--which went for the unification process. And only one county in this entire state said, "No. We will not do it. And we are not going to do it. And we are telling you up front we are not going to do it. And we are never going to do it." And that was the county of Kern.

And so there were certain criteria that had to be met. And you always had an organizational committee in the various counties to set this thing up. And it had to do with the scattering of racial breakdown in different schools and the alignment of money that was available for school districts. And these would always be. . . . These plans that would be sent up to the State Department of Education by Kern County were in violence to the unification concept. They knew it when they sent it. They knew it wouldn't be well received, it would be rejected. It would be sent back and said, "Go back to the drawing boards in Kern County or you don't qualify as such, and we are not going to accept this." And Kern would come back and draw another plan which they knew was not going to be satisfactory, and they kept this up.

Well, this is not a comfortable position to be in, as a senator from a county doing that.

But they kept doing it, and they did it and they did it and they did it, to a point where the state board of education said, and the committees in the legislature said, "We will cut off state money to the county of Kern. You either do this or we don't pay you the money." And Kern County says, "Well, then go ahead and cut us off." And Kern County knew that there were other constitutional provisions where you couldn't cut them off totally. You had to bring some state money in to here. And they just put in their heels in the ground and dug their heels, and eventually, as it came to pass, it's never happened. And this county, to this day, has never unified.

I used to tell people, "It is a typical, basic, historical attitude of a provincial county--rural, still packing guns on their hips and deciding what they are going to do and what they weren't going to do with the law." And, of course, Unruh was so up tight on this thing that he was the natural leader in passage of the act, and author and that kind of thing.

DOUGLASS: Had you amended the act to include nonunified [districts]? Is that why you were having this kind of discussion, or offered an amendment so that Kern County would be included?

STIERN: Well, I tried to show that because of the size of the county and the size of the districts and the peculiar geographics of the county, that it was, in some ways, almost impossible to unify parts of this county. And that may work fine for many areas, but where you have enormous districts, where you bus students great mileage every day, that it didn't fit in counties like this, or in a county like San Bernardino, where you have these enormous school districts in Victorville and Barstow and Needles in these enormous desert areas, where students are bused seventy-eighty miles a day, both ways. And not only that, but you had the basic pattern, which we didn't like to show, was that Kern County is an area in which southern patterns have been placed on it. And we have absolutely lily-white areas that have no blacks in them and there won't be. Even to this day, and I can't tell you how bad that is, except that. . . . I had a black on my staff here I couldn't even send in parts of Kern County. This woman would have been ridiculed and shouted out, jeered out, and she was a wonderful and a fine person.

And we've had that to contend with. I can't put my finger on it without doing some research on it. There was a study made by Cornell University, probably twenty-five,

twenty-eight, thirty years ago, where they studied six areas in the United States on racial problems. And this was one of them. And I vividly remember the conclusion of what they did. They used fake names, but they told you who they were at the end of the book. And it said, "Kern County is a county whose culture is the southern pattern which has been transferred and imposed upon this area." Instead of Black people in cabins on plantations, it was shacky-type places on corporate farms with Mexicans and Filipinos and other racial groups. These were patterns the growers of the south brought here. And they weren't going to have their kids in school with minorities. And north of the river, north of the Kern River, what's called the North High area district, Standard School District, there isn't a single black student in those schools. And as far as they were concerned, there wouldn't be. And the man who was the head of the committee studying unification here was from that operation. And so it is an example that law cannot be enforced unless people want it enforced.

The terrible thing about this, to me, was that, you see, the state didn't follow through. They sent the money anyway.

DOUGLASS: Oh, really. They didn't force it.

STIERN: They folded up and folded in to Kern County. And so Kern County won, and they are the only county to this day that did not meet the Unruh legislation requirements. And that whole story alone and what happened and how it happened, I think it would be an interesting thing for somebody to do like a doctorate on that whole subject some time. It would be interesting, about the exchanges and how the State Board of Education was involved, the Department of Education was involved, the legislative committees on education were involved. And Kern County whipped them all, and they know it. And that's strange.

DOUGLASS: And yet there is another interesting factor here too, because there are some educators who have maintained that unification, as a uniform answer to all areas, was not a good one. As you pointed out, aside from these racial problems, which are not good, unification became a whole way of life also, which wasn't necessarily uniformly correct, I think.

STIERN: You keep seeing the strangest things in looking at the most extreme pockets, and I know of several in Sonoma County and I know of several in Kern County, where the school and the school district was made up of a school that had seven

children in it. That was the whole school. And why is that going to be preserved? Blake School up in the mountains in Kern County hasn't many children, "My mother and father went there. My mother and father want me to go there. We are not going to get into a bus and go down where you have a better curriculum and all that kind of thing. We are going to maintain this school district." And there were all kinds of pocket situations like that. And people were just not going to give it up. They were tenacious about it.

X. REAPPORTIONMENT AND 1966 ELECTION

Senator Stiern's Campaign

DOUGLASS: Okay. I wanted to talk a little bit about your senate race that year, in '66. You had had Kings County added to your district, out of that whole reapportionment discussion. What effect did that have on you, in terms of your constituency?

STIERN: Well, one of the interesting things, when they were realigning. . . . I have always felt sorry for Kings County. It's little. It can't defend itself. And every time reapportionment comes along, they get bandied around or wherever it is best for reapportionment and not what's best for Kings County. Kings County has been put

together with Monterey County at times, and Kings County has been put together with Tulare County at times. And, in this case, it was put together with Kern, and there was some logic for why it was done.

Kern was predominantly a Democrat county. And Kings was probably the most Democratic county in the state at that time. It also had a strange situation where it is very much like Kern County. Hanford is the Kings County seat. Bakersfield is Kern's county seat. Everything was agricultural. Everything was oil. Everything was land development. And the California Water Project was common to both counties. Corporate farming is big in both counties. The Salyer interests and the Boswell interests are in Kings County. And so it is kind of fitting that you could do that. The two counties were geographically easy to service. On my run back and forth from Sacramento to Bakersfield, I would kick off at Selma and go down through Hanford and do what I do with the county officials and city officials and then come back on into Highway 99 to Kern County and into Bakersfield. And it lends itself well to do that. And so the counties grew together pretty well because our economic, our social

backgrounds, and everything were pretty much the same.

So that didn't hurt me at all. It didn't hurt them. It probably helped them because they were piggybacking on everything that Kern County needed that was exactly what Kings needed. And they were little, and they went along with it. They really gained more than being tied up with Monterey and Tulare.

DOUGLASS: You faced a man named [Joe] Scott. Was there anything outstanding about that election?

STIERN: The outstanding thing about it was that the Republicans came up with no candidate, and Scott was a primary write-in. And they just put him there to have a name on the ballot. He didn't campaign hard at all. He didn't do very much. He was easy to beat.

DOUGLASS: I assume from your comments that cross-filing, when it ended in '62, really didn't have much impact on you. Is that correct?

STIERN: No. It didn't have much impact.

DOUGLASS: Because you hadn't used that.

STIERN: I have always enjoyed people of the Republican party who knew me or my family or have known me in my professional practice or in my community life with all the things that I was involved in. Which were all the red-feathered things and Community Chest and United Fund and Child

Guidance Clinic and Family Services Agency and Boy Scouts and all the things that I had contacts with that would cross over. It would be like if your family was a staunch Republican family and you had a cattle ranch and I had taken care of your cattle ranch for twenty years, you knew that I did a very good job, and you would say, "Well, I assume he's as conscientious in this as he would be in what. . . ."

DOUGLASS: It's a matter of trust.

STIERN: That's right. And the same would be in my practice and things that I'd do, people would do that. And then my father's name was the same as mine. And so there were forty-two years of a "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" type teacher with that name that a lot of people knew in the community. And that dinner we went to the other night, it comes out of a dinner like that, where you see people who probably staunchly would fight me at the polls in their own party, but "he isn't all that bad during the four years and a fairly conservative Democrat. So we go along with him."

DOUGLASS: So that was a pretty easy election.

STIERN: That was the easiest election I have ever had. There was just no challenge really hardly at all. [Vote: Stiern, 70,419; Scott, 46,677.]

Changes in the Senate and Unruh's Influence

DOUGLASS: Well, all right, in '67, and you pointed this, there were twenty-two new senators coming into the senate as a result of reapportionment. And most of them, as you commented, were former assemblymen. And they had their own agenda. And you began to see this, I gather, right away.

STIERN: And they were from southern California, south of the Tehachapis. A big shift to the south part of the state. And many of those--what's interesting as you look at it, many, many of those just leapfrogged, just used the state senate as a pole vault, and they are now in congress. We are talking about Beilenson and [Henry A.] Waxman, and Howard Berman and [William E.] Dannemeyer and those people from the Long Beach area.[1] People out of the San Diego area, like Clair Burgener and those people. They just used the senate as. . . . They were there just a short time and they were in congress. That has always interested me because they apparently had their sights settled on that in the long run. Four years gave them a shot at setting it up, and they did it.

DOUGLASS: But they did begin right away to start working

1. Waxman, Dannemeyer, and Berman served in the state assembly, but not in the state senate.

on the operating rules of the senate, did they not? In order to make it more like the assembly.

STIERN: Yes, they did. And the strange part of that was that you saw Jesse Unruh coming over on vital votes and, as we say, working his boys on the senate floor. Miller and Unruh were hostile enemies, hostile enemies. And Miller resented it very much because each legislator has the privilege of the floor of the other house. He would come over in vital things, vital to Unruh and vital to the assembly, and he'd shoehorn through by going around and talking to all his friends that had come over. And Miller would stand up and make these speeches about "Jesse Marvin Unruh coming over here and strutting on this floor, trying to run the state senate with his lackeys that came over here from his house so that he could control the whole legislature." I remember those speeches very, very well.

DOUGLASS: And you saw Unruh doing this on the floor?

STIERN: Oh, yes. And he did that. He'd work all his people, and there are many, many of them.

DOUGLASS: Were there certain particular ones that he worked?

STIERN: Oh, sure. You see, they just came in waves. Because there was a time when Grunsky was an

assemblyman. There was a time when Hugh Burns was an assemblyman. These guys all had some kind of a touch from the assembly when they came across to the senate. And so the thing that broke the camel's back was the big inundation that came across following reapportionment. That's when you got all these people.

DOUGLASS: But did Unruh have particular people out of that group that he would go for?

STIERN: Oh, yes. People like Beilenson, who was from the senate, and the ones that had come from the bay area that had come into the south. The whole Los Angeles complex. The people that you think of as the Waxman, Berman, Beilenson group that developed great power in the L. A. area as a result of a lot of that kind of thing.

But he would come over and urge them to vote and show them why. And it makes a difference. It's an amazing thing to see a guy who had been a leader in the other house come over and look you in the eye and say, "We need this, and you know it as well as I do." That's what I call the assemblyization of the senate. You never had that in the senate before that happened. I could vote thirty-nine to one and be the one, and nobody would bat an eye. Members would say, "That's what Walt needs. And if that's the way Kern County feels," you know,

"he knows his county better than anybody else."

DOUGLASS: So party began to really to emerge in those younger Democratic party people.

STIERN: Party and region. Because, you see, there are thirty-one out of eighty assemblymen out of Los Angeles County. And when you start changing that mix, it changed what the senate had enjoyed. When I first went to the senate, there were thirty-four districts north of the Tehachapis and six south. And after reapportionment, there were twenty-two south of the Tehachapis and eighteen north.

DOUGLASS: I gather from what you are saying, he was effective. They responded to him.

STIERN: Oh, yes, they did.

DOUGLASS: It must have been incredible, seeing him on the floor.

STIERN: You know, Mr. Unruh was a strange leader to me because he's blunt, he challenged the governor's position. He is the one that got more money into the appropriation funds of the assembly and the senate for professional legislative staff to fight back against the governor's office, authorized more money for specialists and technicians and consultants. So we had what the governor's office had, and we were on equal par with them. He did a lot of those kind of

things. And he'd get off these strange things like where he said, "Money was the mother's milk of politics." And then later, as the state treasurer, he was looked at with stature in the New York bond markets and places like that because he did know where the power structure was, and he did know what a state could do with bond money. He didn't hesitate to use bonds. And even to this day, as treasurer of the state, is highly respected in the United States for his knowledge of how to use bonds for government. And he does it. But they went along with him.

The thing I never understood, I never will understand, how a body of eighty people will all cave in to one man. And it doesn't make any difference if it's Willie Brown or whether it's Jesse Unruh or whether it was Robert [T.] Monagan or whether it was [Robert] Moretti or whether it was Speaker [Luther H.] Lincoln when he was there, or whether it was Speaker Ralph Brown, when he was there. I can't conceive of eighty people caving in to one person. And that's what happened.

Whereas on the senate side, the operation is five people, the Senate Rules Committee, with the pro tem as the leader of that. But always three of one party, two of the other party, and these five run the show for forty

people. Over there you've got one man that runs it for eighty, and he is all-powerful. I couldn't be comfortable with that. I told you we flipped a coin when I went in. I would have been there two years and out, and I would have no longer have been in the assembly. I could not live with that situation. To me, that's not representative government.

DOUGLASS: Did Unruh have some specific conversations with you? Would he ever work someone like you when he was on the floor?

STIERN: No. He would not. He would leave me alone because he knew he wasn't going to be convincing with that type of politics. I abhored it, and he knew it.

DOUGLASS: How about off the floor, though? Did he ever . . .

STIERN: Oh, he was friendly. And he thought of me as part of the Democratic bloc in the senate, which I was. I couldn't deny that I was a Democrat and worked with them. But he got nowhere with Miller. And Miller was a power bloc in the senate.

DOUGLASS: And yet Miller was pro-union.

STIERN: He was pro-union.

DOUGLASS: Which is interesting. They shared that.

STIERN: Yes, it is. It certainly is. Miller was

trained as a lawyer but never practiced as a lawyer. And he used to joke about "Well, I don't know how you legal fellows did this," which was strange because he was a better lawyer, although he never practiced, than a number of the practicing lawyers on the floor. But he disliked Unruh with a passion because of that type of operation.

DOUGLASS: Who were the other sitting Democrats who felt almost as strongly, say, as Miller about this activity? In other words, not new ones.

STIERN: People who had been there for awhile. Well, people like. . . . That's a hard question to answer. It's a hard question to answer because Miller was so influencing, he usually took the Democratic bloc along with him.

DOUGLASS: Well, when I get the transcript to you, you might think of some. What about the new ones who did come over? Did any of them resist Unruh?

STIERN: There is always a new feeling of freedom to an assemblyman who comes to the senate. I have talked through the years to many assemblymen who say, "Walter, you can't imagine the freedom of this house."

DOUGLASS: When Unruh came onto the floor, did some of them not go along with him?

STIERN: They'd go silent. Or they would go quiet.

Occasionally they wouldn't go with him. But the longer they were in the senate, the more they cut their ties. After they cut their ties, they liked that independence, that freedom that they had that they didn't have before.

DOUGLASS: So this 1967 business was sort of the first big shot that he did of that because he had this opportunity.

STIERN: That's right. And then it faded. Because some of those went to congress, some of them left the legislature and went back into their businesses and different things.

DOUGLASS: That must have been incredible to observe.

STIERN: It was. It was strange to watch and see how people would change their position just because one man walks into the room and walks around. But he was also a person who had controlled their monetary sources of campaigns and would do it in the future. And they knew that. And they also had, in the corner of their brain, "he could become governor and we'll pay the price if we don't," you know. I am sure that lingered in their minds.

DOUGLASS: So it was money and power.

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: And he is very skillful.

STIERN: Very skillful at that.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel, yourself, positive effects from having the availability of more staff, which he, I gather, got the funding for pretty much?

STIERN: He was the one who got more consultants for committees really. That was what he did. On the senate side, the money that had been coming for staff had to come out of the contingency fund of the senate. So as President pro tem Hugh Burns aged and weakened and was replaced by others, staff began to grow. But it grew too much. We have too much staff, it's almost like staff taking over at times. Until 1966, when we had reapportionment, about that time, I just had one woman in my Sacramento office. Myself and her. And that's the way Burns liked to run a tight ship and not appropriate a lot of money. When I was elected in 1959, there were no district offices. You didn't have any of that kind of thing. You didn't have leased cars, you didn't have the things that took place as things started to grow. And as these things started to grow, members who were eager to be pro tems would make all these offers. They'd give these goodies or give these to members, trying to encourage their support and their vote. And that's a strange way to shoot.

And I resisted that. There is just something about--maybe it's a natural

stubbornness or maybe it's--some people say it is my German background, some people say a lot of things. But I don't like to see rewards given that way. I like to see rewards earned. And trust means a lot to me. And loyalty means a lot to me, and choosing the best people you have to do the best job in whatever field you have.

The expertise in the senate is interesting because all of us have abilities that nobody else has. We are creatures of our background, and we are creatures of our education experience. And so I would know things that another man would not know, and another man would know things that I have never had any connection with at all. When you think of the differences between people like Senator Nicholas [C.] Petris from Alameda County and Walter Stiern from Kern County, I don't know anything about longshoremen. I don't know anything about port problems. He doesn't know anything about oil production. [Laughter] And it's just the way it is.

XI. SENATOR STIERN'S OFFICE AND CAMPAIGNS

Staff Members

DOUGLASS: You mentioned your one-person staff member. This might be a good time to comment on that.

Was this the person who had worked for Dorothy Donahoe?

STIERN: No. This was a woman whose name was Dorothy Fowler, who had worked for other senators before I got there. When she came to me, and what I did, I asked my predecessor's secretary if she would stay with my office, because she knew Kern County and had Kern County connections, a Sacramento woman. And her name was Lillian Stillwell. And she said, "I will stay with you for one year, but I want to go back to Sacramento State University and get my degrees in psychology. And I promised myself I would do this." She was a woman about thirty-four, had two children, and she wanted to do that. And so that was an interesting thing for me to have, the woman who had been with my predecessor, because there was no politics between that. Although he was a Republican, and I was a Democrat. I never did know what Lillian Stillwell was. I never asked her. I don't know. She served me well, did her job just like she did for the other man.

But then when she left, I had to find somebody. And she helped me pick up this woman whose name was Dorothy Fowler. And Dorothy Fowler had served a Senator [R. R.] Cunningham

of San Bernardino County [represented Kings County, 1937-1952] and a Senator [Swift] Berry from Placer County [represented Amador, El Dorado Counties, 1953-1969]. And when she came to work for me, she stayed with me to the very end. I had her for twenty-six years.

The other woman, and this is interesting because it has to do with continuity of an office and how successful you are with an office. The other woman was a woman whose name was Gloria McLean, and she was a Bakersfield woman who was a friend of Dorothy Donahoe's. And Dorothy Donahoe had known her in school and everything, and she was a single woman. And she went with Dorothy to Dorothy's Committee on Education. And at one time, was a person who worked very hard for my very first Democrat opponent to defeat me because she was such a friend of this man. He was a good man. He was a fine person. Actually, he was the labor commissioner of Kern County and she was the secretary to the labor commissioner. And so then when she went with Dorothy, she didn't know she would end up working for me.

[End of Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

STIERN: Gloria McLean had been secretary to William Walker, who was the labor commissioner in Kern

County, and was my first opponent on the Democratic ticket. And so she was also a good friend of Dorothy Donahoe. And, of course, I had known Dorothy Donahoe and was a good friend of hers too. Dorothy Donahoe used to tell Gloria McLean, "Well, when you get to know Walter, you'll like him. You just don't know him. That's all." So, in 1960, at the time Dorothy became dreadfully ill and she didn't come to her office, Gloria had gone to her home, she came back and Gloria came across to the senate to talk to me. And she said, "Do you know that our friend, Dorothy, is in bad shape," and so forth and so on. And as a result of that, I told you about how Senator Teale, who was a physician, intervened.

But then when Dorothy died, I asked Gloria if she would come to work for me. We were allowed a person in our district. Dorothy Donahoe had money as chairman of the Assembly Education Committee for a secretary, and Gloria sat in that office. And then Dorothy Donahoe invited her two other Kern County colleagues who didn't have offices or any money for that--John C. Williamson, the assemblyman in this county, and myself--to put a desk and chair in there too, so we would have a pivot to work from. And that put us in the same room with Gloria. And

that's why Gloria was hesitant whether that was going to be such a great situation. And so Dorothy was a catalyst in bringing Gloria and Senator Stiern together. And she was with me to the very end of my tenure. And even at this point, she refuses to give up and comes over here once every ten days to help me with correspondence and things, although she is retired and had had state service before she had had legislative service. And is a fantastic woman.

When they decided to have administrative assistants for people in the legislature, she is a first. I chose a woman. I chose Gloria as my administrative assistant. And people thought I was out of my mind choosing a woman for a job like that. "You don't know what you are doing." I said, "I know exactly what I'm doing. She knows me like the palm of her hand. She knows my district. She is from Bakersfield. She is a native of that area. She knows her circumstances." When Dorothy died, then there was a group that came at Gloria, wanting to know if she would run to take her place. They were used to a woman in the assembly. She refused to do so. She didn't want to be an active political figure.

And so she is the one that you are thinking of, but the nice thing about this was, and I know it is not always the case, these two women, Dorothy Fowler and Gloria McLean, just worked hand and glove with me. And Dorothy did the Sacramento scene, and Gloria did the district office scene. And then, eventually, I took Gloria to Sacramento as my administrative assistant. And that broke the ice, and now there are a lot of women AA's in Sacramento. But Gloria was the first one. And that's because of her ability and people watching her and seeing what she could do and how well it worked. It opened the door for a lot of women in top staff positions that was not there before.

DOUGLASS: How long did it take for her to be accepted in that role?

STIERN: Not long. Not long. Because of the art that she had for it. And recognizing what she was doing, she knew she was breaking ice, in a way. Then the first thing I knew Senator Cobey from Merced-Madera had a woman AA, and somebody else had a woman AA. And it started developing that way.

DOUGLASS: What year was that? Do you recall, generally? Approximate?

STIERN: It seems to me, if memory serves me, it was

around '67, '68, around in there. Now, eventually, I promoted her to another title, which a lot of people are not aware of. We had a situation where if you had two or more counties, and I had four, you could have what was called a county coordinator. And I then promoted her to be a county coordinator. So she worked with the elements of four counties. You know, they could go through her. She could go through sheriff's departments and police departments and city governments.

DOUGLASS: She worked out of Sacramento when she did that? Or did she come back down?

STIERN: She could go either way. She could come down here. In fact, in the scheme of things, in the senate, they provide a car for a person like that, a rental car. And what was interesting is that she never used it, never, not a penny's worth. She always used her own car. And I was able to get, in lieu of that, a gasoline-oil thing for her because she was making a lot of travel, you know, to Victorville and great distances.

The reason I have spent some time on this is that when you watch a senate legislative office, you either have a catastrophe or you have something that works hand-in-glove perfectly. And I have seen offices in

Sacramento where the member would shout at a staff member. And you get the kind of woman that can't stand that, that runs out of the office crying and weeping and going to the women's room so that they can recompose theirselves. Because the person maybe either is so egotistical or so demanding or so inconsiderate that he'll ask for something out of a filing cabinet and if he hasn't got it in his hands in sixty seconds, he is screaming at her to get it again, that kind of thing. In my office, we never had that. I always give my office a lot of rein because they knew how I felt. If it was something that they thought there was some question about, they would ask me. They'd never go out on their own. And I was complimented many, many, many times. Senator Diane Watson, who said, "I don't know how your office works so well. I want to sit down and talk to you about how you've done this because everybody knows that the Stiern office works just the same if he's there or not there, with the staff that he has." And I have been blessed by my staff. They always say, "Well, it's mutual." The member has something to do with that, and the staff responds.

DOUGLASS: What was the title you gave Dorothy Fowler at

the time you made McLean the administrative assistant?

STIERN: I gave her the AA that was open. By this time, you had a woman who was. . . . Dorothy is my age. This is another thing. Very often you find that in legislative offices they do not retain women to their older years. You know, they want younger women, and you don't see women in that age group. But I had Dorothy. Dorothy was just as effective and just as efficient, moreso as she became sixty and sixty-five and seventy, as anybody in the building. And the strange part was that--this is coincidental--but when I left the senate, I had been the "dean of the senate," the longest serving member of the senate. Dorothy Fowler, when she left the senate, was the dean of the legislative staff who worked for the Senate Rules Committee, everybody that you could think of that works for the senate, in district offices, consultants in Sacramento and Bakersfield, San Diego, wherever it is, in the state buildings in the south, anywhere, she is the one with the biggest seniority. So it was brought out when I left that Dorothy Fowler, his AA, was dean of the corps of the Rules Committee, of all the people who worked for the state senate.

DOUGLASS: What I was curious about, though, was when you

brought McLean into Sacramento, what was Fowler's title? How did you handle that?

STIERN: She was the secretary to Senator Stiern. And when I brought her in, Gloria was the AA.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But there wasn't any bad feeling about it?

STIERN: No. At the time I could make Gloria the county coordinator, I shifted her title over to Dorothy. So when Dorothy retired, holding that title for three years also improved her retirement pay a little bit, having gone out as an AA.

DOUGLASS: You have given a great tribute to these two women. But running a staff and having a huge district to operate, there must have been some kinds of problems. If you were to name--and it may have nothing to do with their personalities--if you were to name a couple of problems, what would be the ones that frustrated you the most, in terms of delegating to staff and things not working out?

STIERN: Well, what was interesting was that I was authorized secretaries for four district offices. So that I had a woman in Hanford for Kings County. I had a woman in Barstow for that part of San Bernardino County I had, which was all the high desert. And then I had a woman in Bakersfield, in the Bakersfield office. And I

had a half-time woman in the Pasadena office. And these women, I gave great freedom to, from the standpoint that they knew their backyard in the district and who the movers and doers and all that kind of thing were. And they would usually become part of that community's functions.

DOUGLASS: They would represent you at . . .

STIERN: At different things that they would go to. And then these people would come to them for things, and they would use our lease lines in those offices. And school people would use them, and people doing community service things, and all that kind of thing.

And then Dorothy and Gloria would intertwine with that in that we let those women make some decisions at the local level. I used them more than a secretary. I used them like a field representative for Senator Stiern. And this was developed to a higher level in some regards. In the Barstow office, that woman got involved in senior problems and senior citizen problems of helping with state forms and all this kind of thing on real property tax breaks for seniors and all that kind of thing. She had developed that to a fare-thee-well. In the Pasadena office was a lady whose name is [Mrs. Elbie] Hickambottom. And her husband was

chairman of the board of education in Pasadena. And so, being school oriented, you see, it was great for me to get my knowledge quicker from what the school problems for that area were by having somebody associated with it. And it just happened that the woman in Hanford, her husband was a farm advisor for Kings County, and that's an agricultural county. So that was a good connection with agriculture there.

And so we would use these. And Dorothy Fowler would work with them as they were extensions of our office. Yet Gloria, she could come down here any time she wanted to and move about and help these women and see what they were doing, to ride herd on the four regions that were involved.

DOUGLASS: Did you ever have any men working in your offices?

STIERN: Yes. I did. I had a man named Phil Waterhouse that was with me from the very first day I was elected in Bakersfield. We had a title called field representative, and I used him. And he came out of journalism, and his background came out of there. Willis Culner, an attorney, was also on my staff.

And then, later on, I had a man whose name was Philip Foley, who was a very, very

interesting man because he lent himself so well to working with oriented groups. And his background was that he was a laicized Catholic priest, who was an active priest for eleven years, and then asked to be relieved as a priest from Rome, and it was allowed. And he married a woman who [Laughter] was a secretary in my office.

DOUGLASS: So he was with you until the end?

STIERN: So he was still with me to the end.

DOUGLASS: He has a lot of continuity, doesn't he?

STIERN: Yes. That's right. He had such a lot of interesting connections in that he was good at counseling. He did a lot of that kind of thing. And his wife was Hispanic. She was a Mexican-American woman. And he was trained in psychology. And that's what he is shifting to right now, to be a practicing pyschologist.

DOUGLASS: Do you attribute your high marks in getting reelected partly to the expertise or the professional nature of these people you had working for you? Do you think this was a key factor?

1970 Election

STIERN: I think so. In probably my most critical election this came out more than anything else. I was up against a man named Bill Park one time, who today is rather prominent in Republican

politics. You have seen the name a lot because he has always been active. He's been the vice chairman of the Republican party in the state. And there was always the problem of whether to make him the state president or not. And he has always been inched out just by a shade, the thinnest of a shade, partly because he is in the business of waste disposal, and some people feel that that's a bad area for the president of the Republican Central Committee to be in.

But, that election was an unbelievable election with tremendous money put into it. One in which Ronald Reagan came to Bakersfield, went on TV and radio and everything else to try to get rid of me.

DOUGLASS: This was 1970, right?

STIERN: Yes. And this was very hard, to have a charismatic governor come down and go on the tube and do all that kind of thing.

DOUGLASS: Why were you targeted?

STIERN: I was targeted because I would not go along with some of his tax problems that he was in. And neither would one of his Republicans go along with it. Thirteen people blocked Governor Reagan from doing what he wanted to do one time. Like he wanted to raise taxes for some reasons that he had. And that's a big separate story

unto itself.

DOUGLASS: Yes. I want to go into that. But what did Reagan say about you when he got on the air?

STIERN: Oh, you know, he would tell about all the horrible things that I did and what a horrible person I was to work with and "send me people I can work with. Send me Mr. Park so I can work with him and not a person who is in opposition to me," and that kind of thing. But, in doing that, that--and this may interest you, you'll have to think about, whether you want to do it or not--I had to go to court as a candidate. It is the only time this has happened in the history of California. And I sued the governor, and I sued Mr. Park, and I sued some. . . .

DOUGLASS: Spencer-Roberts.

STIERN: This was a Spencer-Roberts campaign. This was what I am all leading up to. The Spencer-Roberts firm was powerful strong at that time. And that's who Park was using. And he was using Reagan, all that that would bring to him, Spencer-Roberts, with all that that would bring to him. And then what they did, they falsely reported three of my votes--that I had done three things that I had not done. And the proof of this was the Senate Journal shows how you vote. And they had said I had voted otherwise. And this was what made it so difficult for me

because in all three cases, they went into racism to do this. The racial issues they used were that I had supported Angela Davis and fought a resolution of the senate which reprimanded her, which I did not. These were all Republican-authored documents. And one Eldridge Cleaver, the same thing with him, teaching at the University of California. And the third, busing for racial equality. And that was handled by an assemblyman named [L. E.] Townsend.

Well, Schrade and Coombs and Townsend were Republicans who supported me, sent me money to put ads in the Bakersfield Californian that I had not done what Reagan and Park and Spencer-Roberts and all these people were saying that I did. So I went to court. I hired a lawyer and went to court and put a stay on, to stay this kind of publicity on radio, television, and newspapers.

DOUGLASS: Now when would it have been?

STIERN: And to show cause why they could do that. And, of course, they couldn't because the record of the senate showed otherwise.

DOUGLASS: Right. But when was this in the campaign? Was it like in October or September?

STIERN: Oh, what was happening to me, it was getting

worse and worse and worse. And I could see that in this kind of a county or state it was taking its toll.

DOUGLASS: But you are getting closer and closer to the November election.

STIERN: That's right. And so I was able to have a stay put on, which held for something like--if memory serves me, I am going to have to check out the date--twenty-seven days. And about seventeen days before the election, it was taken off. The court proceeding was strange. A judge, a Republican judge, in Bakersfield, whose name was Borton, Richard Borton, who had been a Pat Brown, Sr. appointee, was faced by my attorney and by Mr. Park's attorney. And he put the hold on their ads, and for them to show cause why it should be removed. And then when it came to court on the docket, he was ill, and a judge from Fresno was in Bakersfield, who was a superior court judge. Knowing nothing about this at all, he was appointed to take this case. He called both legal people up to the front and said, "You know, by federal law, I can't do this. I have to lift this stay. You cannot hold this on any longer. In a political campaign, you can say anything you want about any candidate. True, false, or anything. You can say I molested little children, I stole old

women's purses. You can say anything you want. And as a candidate, I can't do anything about that. That's a federal thing." And he says, "You know, I have to lift this." So he did.

So as soon as he lifted it, the last seventeen days, you know, Park was saying, "You see, I was right. They took this thing off. The court held that Stiern couldn't protect himself with what he was doing, and so forth." And he did this. And started out again. But if I hadn't had that break there, the untruth would have been more damaging. Now, this is where the man in my office comes in to play. I released him from his salary from the state, and he, all by himself, with his theories and plans and montages and articles and newspaper and radio and television ads and things, working with a limited budget, he just wiped Spencer-Roberts out.

DOUGLASS: Who was this?

STIERN: Phil Waterhouse. And, you know, in that election, my opponent took over an automobile salesroom of a garage that had closed down. It had been the Plymouth agency here. They had enormous things, red, white and blue. They had like Nixonettes, young girls dressed in red, white, and blue, who were Park girls and doing

all this kind of thing. They came on with everything they had. Phil, plain, out-of-sight, writing all this stuff, doing all this stuff on his own, doing his journalism, reading the community, knowing the community, we wiped them out. They never, ever got over that. Park has never gotten over that. He can't understand how he lost when he had all that going for him. Because we played a simple campaign.[1]

My way of campaigning is I have a Mustang convertible, an early one, a '64, and I just put magnetic signs on my doors. I've got "STIERN" on both license plates on that car, and June goes with me. We park in a town, in the center of a little town, and I walk the street and talk to people. It is always a personalized thing. You are looking at a crazy candidate. You are looking at a candidate that blows up balloons and puts them on sticks and hands them to little children, which stops parents for a second while you can speak to them on a street in Delano or Arvin or Taft or whatever. I have blown up 10,000 million balloons in my life and been laughed at and joked about. "Show me a circus and I'll show you a clown," and all this kind of thing. "Politicians are full of hot air, and

1. The vote was: Stiern, 62,400; Park, 49,959.

Stiern is filling these balloons." And yet I tried to personalize myself in communities, and I didn't have big bucks to spend on expenditures. I never used an agency in my whole time. Phil handled every campaign I had.

DOUGLASS: Was there a great infusion of money from the Republican party into this campaign?

STIERN: Oh, yes. Even from out of state. Because of the control in Sacramento, it's worth that to bring money from out of state to do that.

DOUGLASS: Right. Because at the end of the election, it was 21-19, the balance.

STIERN: You see the fight was to get my senate seat. To make it 20-20, where the Republican lieutenant governor could cast the deciding vote on a crucial tie vote. The Republicans were in control with the governor and with Mike Curb and Finch (Finch was for a while with Ronald Reagan), and my seat became very important for the biggest state in the union.

DOUGLASS: So, aside from the fact that Reagan was annoyed at your stance on some things, they figured you might be vulnerable if they put this infusion of money and everthing in. Why was it they really went for you?

STIERN: Well, as truthfully as I can tell you, and when I say it I don't want to sound egotistical

because it is not that. I told you that I enjoyed a Republican vote along with a Democrat vote from the very start, when I left my practice. And those people knew that I was not a liar. And those people knew that I would not say that I was doing what I didn't do. And I reproduced pages out of the Senate Journal, what the vote actually was. You can't fight with that. That's what it is. And for this man to run a campaign in which. . . . The campaigns from that point to the end were done that way, by using innuendoes and absolutely falsehoods to try to defeat me. He was saying, "Walter Stiern did what Walter Stiern did not do," in trying to defeat me in an area where racism is a factor. And that's a hostile thing to be working in, to have that happen.

DOUGLASS: Why did they go for you? I mean, why did Reagan target you, and the party? Why did they think they had a chance? You know, what was that factor?

STIERN: Well, one of them was that I was the last Democrat officeholder in the south Joaquin Valley left. You want to remember at this moment, see, when I went out of office in November, '86, all five Kern County supervisors are Republicans, all but two councilmen in the city of Bakersfield are Republicans. Every

officeholder, like sheriff and district attorney and all these offices, are all Republican. I am the last Democrat in this area, and with Donald Rogers winning the [1986] election, there are none. They are totally wiped out in the south San Joaquin Valley. So they were trying to get as many Republican seats as they could. And they saw this. And, of course, there were people that came down, like to the Kern County Airport, and would hold press conference who were Republicans out of Sacramento. And then they would go back home. And that stuff would be used.

DOUGLASS: Were there members of Reagan's staff who came down?

STIERN: There were Reagan people who came down. Reagan himself came down.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But his own staff, like his inner corps group?

STIERN: Well, working behind the scene. Getting things like billboards that are purchased by financial institutions by the year that would turn these over to Bill Park for three months. "Oh, sure. Get the paper and put them on them. You can use them." That type of thing.

DOUGLASS: How did the newspapers treat you in terms of this debacle over these three votes?

STIERN: The newspaper is a Republican newspaper, solid core. The owner is a woman whose name is Mrs. Fritts [Mrs. Bernice Harrell Chipman Fritts Koerber], who was on the kitchen cabinet thing of Ronald Reagan from the very beginning. So I could get no help there. I couldn't even get equal space in a paper.

DOUGLASS: And the editorial section wouldn't help you out, in terms of this legal problem?

STIERN: No. And the other thing that is interesting, political ads which would appear, and it said around in little fine print "political ad," on the edge of it, Park would come out with statements about me which were absolutely false and not true. And people would call me on the phone and say, "I see this in the paper. The Californian has this in the paper." And I would say, "No. if you look close, that's a political ad. Mr. Park is saying that in his ad, which is published in The Californian." "Oh, I don't know. I don't know they'd say that if it wasn't true. They'd be subject to "libelness" and everything else, and I don't know if I want to fool with anybody who is playing dingle-dangle games with Angela Davis and Eldridge Cleaver. Walt, I'm really surprised at you. I am really shocked. And so I am leaving you." I've had people do that who were Republicans

particularly, and it wasn't true at all.

Senator Jack Schrade from San Diego, who carried the Eldridge Cleaver thing, sent me $200 and said, "Put an ad in the paper and use my stationery." William Coombs, a Republican senator from San Bernardino County, did the same thing on the Angela Davis thing. And [L. E.] Townsend, a Republican assemblyman from Hawthorne, did the same thing on the busing thing. I had not done those things. As I said, those are vicious things to do.

DOUGLASS: So this was a different kind of campaigning than you had ever experienced before?

1982 Election

STIERN: That's right. And when I got into my last campaign. . . . Four years ago, when I ran against a woman--the first time I had ever run against a woman--she did exactly the same thing. Only, in a way, she was worse, because she was a bank officer. And she even went to the point of manufacturing checks and showing them on TV--now this is a bank officer, if you can believe that, in a bank--of what I had done. In taking money from Cesar Chavez and all these different people. And "we don't want that in Kern County, do we?" "And here is a guy that's in the sack with Cesar Chavez. I'll show you his check on this TV program. Here's the check." And she

would actually hold up and show a check, showing the backside of the check showing my signature on that check. And there was no such check. Can you imagine a bank officer doing that, in the first place?

But she was doing it politically, in the second place. And the reason for that is because, as an officeholder, I have to have a treasurer. And my treasurer was a man who happened to be in Davis. It happened to be John Williamson. But every check I got, whether it was for two dollars or whether it was for five hundred dollars, in my campaign went to John Williamson or the Stiern for Senate Committee. And he signed my checks, "John C. Williamson, Treasurer of the Stiern Campaign." There was no check from Cesar Chavez with Walt Stiern's name on the back of it. But she made one, and she used that on TV. "Here it is. You can see it. There's his signature." And she had just lifted my signature off of a newsletter or something.

DOUGLASS: Did you sue her for that?

STIERN: You know, I was in a strange place. When a male takes on a woman, it's a different thing. You have to handle that with kid gloves. You are not treating a lady very ladylike. Well, she wasn't being very ladylike.

DOUGLASS: This is Mary Ann Gutcher.

STIERN: Mary Ann Gutcher, and, to this day, she can't understand why she lost. But that's the kind of thing that is awfully hard for me to fight in a campaign. Where people use an absolute lie, which is magnified, trying to get you out.

DOUGLASS: Again, did you get any newspaper assistance in clarifying that?

STIERN: No. Actually, the newspapers, after twenty-four years of knowing what I had been able to do, went along with her. You know, the paper was owned by the woman who is in the Reagan camp. "It's time for a change." And the editorial endorsement went to Mrs. Gutcher.

That's what my wife was talking about, way early on, when she said, "Don't go into it if you have a tissue-paper skin. If you have an alligator skin, wade right in. Because people do those things."

DOUGLASS: In the '82 campaign with Mary Ann Gutcher, did they pull in guns from Sacramento elsewhere?

STIERN: Oh, yes. Senators William Campbell came down, and Dennis [E.] Carpenter. And people came down to the airport and held meetings in her behalf. Senator Kenneth [L.] Maddy, from a fellow-county in the San Joaquin Valley, where Stiern and Maddy had worked on all kinds of things for agriculture and water and everything together.

He knew exactly what I had done. He came down and fed Gutcher information which she was using, which was false information, came around apologizing to me after I was reelected, saying, "Well, Walter, I don't know what to do except to just say, I think you know how it is. When you are in the other party, there are certain things expected of you." And I said, "Well, that may be true, Ken Maddy, but you'll never find Walter Stiern in Fresno County in a campaign against Maddy." But that's just the way it was.

DOUGLASS: And the local congressman, I gather, backed her. [William M.] Bill Thomas?

STIERN: Oh, the local congressman totally backed her with a passion. Totally.

DOUGLASS: And going back to '70 and then '82, commenting about the amount of money spent, I was curious. Do you recall in '70 what the differential was in the amount of money that you spent in the campaign and what . . .

STIERN: No, but it's a matter of record. We can dig it out.

DOUGLASS: It was a quite large differential, I assume.

STIERN: Yes, it was.

DOUGLASS: Then, in '82, were you having to spend a lot more in '82 than you were used to?

STIERN: Yes. In '82, I ran into a very strange thing. I don't know whether I mentioned that to you or

not, before. Let me ask you. Did I tell you? We were talking, I believe, about the cost of campaigning today and that I didn't want to get up into larger amounts, I did everything I could to keep myself into the lower amounts, although it was a hot, furious campaign. And where a fellow colleague in the senate from Orange County put out a letter in my behalf, with my signature on it, on my stationery, without my permission, and saturated the four counties with that.

DOUGLASS; Yes. Paul [B.] Carpenter.

STIERN: Paul Carpenter.

DOUGLASS: I believe, Senator Stiern, you told me that, but not on the tape.

STIERN: Yes. All right. And I'll mention it at this time. And that operation cost of $40,000, and that took me over the $300,000 mark, which I didn't want to go over. I would have been in at about the $290,000 mark. But without permission, without my knowledge, cooking this up, putting a decal inside which was an American flag to place on your car, and saying how wonderful Stiern was, and all this kind of thing. Anyone reading that letter would have known I never wrote it because it wasn't my style. And yet he was saying, "Well, you were

not taking that woman candidate serious enough, and all I was trying to do was try to help you." And I know that I hurt his feelings when I first approached him on it because my first knowledge of it was when I got my own letter at my house in my own mail. And I just think you don't do that to another person. I think you let them try and run their own campaign. Kern County is not Cypress in Orange County. And Stiern's style is not Carpenter's style. I hurt his feelings. He felt very badly about that for months and finally got over it. But he was the caucus chairman, and he thought I wasn't pushing it hard enough. And I had to show that as money in kind. That took me over up into a figure that was in the three hundred thousand.

DOUGLASS: And Gutcher, do you have any idea how much she spent?

STIERN: Yes. She was spending in the neighborhood--I've got it down, I can dig it out--but it was in the neighborhood of $280,000. And I had been somewhere in and around $294,000, but then this Carpenter move took me over.

DOUGLASS: Now that was when Thomas Bradley was defeated for governor. Was there any impact to you, in terms of who was Democratic candidate was in that election? Was there any coattail effect

either way going on? Between Deukmejian and Bradley?

STIERN: Deukmejian was quite popular.

DOUGLASS: Did that help Gutcher, do you think?

STIERN: Oh, it helped her a lot. And, also, the cultural thing of southern patterns being imposed, this county wasn't ready for a Black governor. And if you have to support a Black governor. . . .

DOUGLASS: Bradley wasn't an asset to you in your campaign?

STIERN: Well, only in that I did a dangerous thing, as far as being a smart politician is concerned. I have never considered myself a smart politician. I am really not a smart politician. I don't hesitate at all standing up on a platform and saying that I support a man on the basis of what the man can do and what his principles are and what he hopes to do. And race is certainly not something that you judge that on. I have no feelings about race at all on having. . . . You know, I have been on many platforms in Kern County with Bradley, saying that, you know, as a Democrat, I totally support this man.

Where I was really caught in this thing is that I know Deukmejian personally. Now my brother, who is a wheelhorse Republican in this community, doesn't hesitate to let people know, and doesn't hesitate to bring it up publicly and

when I'm present with a mixed audience of Democrats and Republicans on how I feel about George Deukmejian. George Deukmejian, in my opinion, is the most qualified person that we have had in the last fifty years to run for governor because of his background and experience that we have had in the last fifty years. And he is a moral person. He is hard worker. He is a decent human being. A good husband; has a good wife. Dick [his brother] loves to have me say this in front of his Republican people, and he is rolling on the floor because I am a Democratic officeholder. But he (Deukmejian) and I just have different philosophical positions on how money should be spent and used. He follows very closely in Ronald Reagan's footsteps. Idolizing him, really. Has hopes, I am sure, of going to higher office.

XII. GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN

Pressure for Vote on Tax Package

And I have nothing but the lack of respect for Ronald Reagan in that I know how he works. I am not at all surprised with the situation that he is in right now because he has done things where he has lied to me and done just the opposite of what he said he would do. I have

been in situations of small groups of fours and fives, working with him. I know how he works. And he never could forgive me for not going along with supporting his tax package the way he wanted it. And thought of me somewhat as a key because I am staunch when I take a position. I don't get wishy-washed around to change things. He literally wanted me to change my position and give my vote as a courtesy vote to another Democrat who would support Ronald Reagan because that man was ill.

DOUGLASS: Did he personally speak to you to do that?

STIERN: Oh, begged me to.

DOUGLASS: How did he do it? Call you into his office?

STIERN: The man was named Tom Carrell, who was a senator from San Fernando Valley who was ill and was going along with him on his tax position, and brought me into the office and asked me. . . . He said, "Tom Carrell is flat on his back. He may be dying. But he's committed to my program. If he was here and not in a sickbed in San Fernando Valley, I would have my bill. All I need is your vote, Walter. I want a courtesy vote on the part of Tom Carrell, a very decent person who is very ill," and so on. And I said, "I have <u>never</u> given a courtesy vote. I will never give a courtesy vote. I don't believe in

courtesy votes. I am here to represent my constituency and not San Fernando Valley. My first obligation is to my counties that I represent." And I said, "I think you're wrong in what you are doing. If I wouldn't do it for Tom Carrell, I am certainly not going to do it for you."

And what we were, we were a bloc of thirteen men. There were twelve Democrats and probably the most conservative Republican on the floor of the senate, a man named Bradley--he was the state senator from Santa Clara County--but, anyway, he was like one of the consciences of the senate. He read everything, he read every bill word for word. When he spoke, you knew he had read the bill. Clark [L.] Bradley. Clark Bradley, the most conservative Republican in the senate, and twelve Democrats took a "no" position. And, you see, they needed the votes and Carrell, not being there, they were denied one vote. He would have got it by twenty-seven votes if I would have switched, and I refused to do it. And this is what angered him to such a degree that, you know, I never was Ronald Reagan's close colleague. He resented that.

DOUGLASS: Was this around 1970 that that happened?

STIERN: Yes. And I ask you this question, not asking you for an answer. How does a senator from one

part of the state capitulate and throw his vote to a whole other part of the state where factors are totally different? And how do you give honest representation to the people that sent you to office to do that? Bakersfield is not San Fernando. Kern County is not Los Angeles County. And I just can't see how you can do that. I have seen it done. I have seen it done by respectable people in the senate, but I never could justify it myself.

DOUGLASS: Was Reagan going to offer you anything, do you think, in return?

STIERN: Yes. And he promised me, "I'll not go into your area, I'll not campaign against you. I'll not go to any of the Republican dinners down there. I will not go to fundraisers. I will stay out. I will leave you alone." "But if you don't give me this vote, I will be down there with everything that I can do to get you out of here."

DOUGLASS: And that's what he did.

STIERN: And he did. Oh, he's lied. You can't match him, what he will do when he is crossed. I know that from personal contact in having had that.

DOUGLASS: Did he ever call you in before that time, or any other time? Alone?

STIERN: You were never alone with Ronald Reagan. He

always had two people there.

DOUGLASS: Now, who was there?

STIERN: There were always a couple of people close in to him on his staff that were there.

DOUGLASS: Who was there with this discussion you just presented? Do you recall?

STIERN: Well, there would have been staff people of his. And he was just telling me what he was going to do with me if I didn't go along with him.

[End of Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

STIERN: I've had him do that and say that to me. And he did. He came down. He did everything he could to get me blasted out of here. At the same time, on another occasion before he left office, Ronald Reagan told me in front of several groups, "I wish men in my own party were as honest and as forthright with me as you have been." I had Ronald Reagan tell me that one time. In other words, he respected me for what I was.

Veto of Dolwig Bill--Teacher's Salaries

I showed him one time where he could stand twelve feet high with the education profession. He rejected what I suggested. That's another side story, if you want to go into it sometimes. And he refused to do what I suggested, and what I suggested turned out to be exactly the fact.

Something that he had done. It had to do with Senator Dolwig's bill, if you want to make a note of that, working with teacher's salaries. And I never, ever thought I would hear that man ever say that.

DOUGLASS: And this was after this other rather nasty incident.

STIERN: Yes, it was. And I have mentioned this to people on occasion because it seems like so out of character for everthing that I had experienced with him. But what he was saying to me was, "You know, you and I are not on the same track, but I wished that that I could trust every Republican in advising me that they would tell me as straight as you are saying something straight, as you see it."

DOUGLASS: Now were there any other times when you had a conversation with him that was fairly private? That is, just his staff or something there?

STIERN: Well, I don't remember whether I was just by myself particularly. It may have been a group of Democratic senators like [Alfred E.] Alquist of the Finance Committee and myself with schools. Ronald Reagan, you remember, had a terrible time with the University of California, sent the national guard down there. Had flyovers with national guard airplanes and did a

lot of things that I thought were strange for a person to do. And at that time, while I was heading the Subcommittee on Higher Education and trying to show him the logic of, you know, the whole world isn't the Berkeley campus as far as the University of California is concerned. And using Alquist, as the chairman of the Finance Committee, to back that up. And then other people like Rodda and people like that. We'd go down sometimes in threes and fours and fives and just see if he wouldn't go along with us, at least to know why we were doing what we were doing.

DOUGLASS: On these occasions you had asked to see him, I gather.

STIERN: Yes. We'd asked to see him, and he would grant audiences to hear what we had to say.

DOUGLASS: But he didn't often ask people to come over.

STIERN: No. He never asked people to come in very often.

DOUGLASS: Why don't we talk about the Dolwig bill, since you brought it up.

STIERN: Well, it's a beautiful example of the man's stubbornness. I have always thought that Ronald Reagan is poorly read and ill advised. It happened in the Sacramento scene. And I think part of the problems he has in the Washington scene are just the same thing again. The

situation was one that I had never seen happen in the senate. And that was a bill that was carried by a then Senator Richard Dolwig of San Mateo County, who had been a longtime Republican member of the senate, who carried a bill which called for justice for school teachers on the minimum salary that you paid them. [S.B. 102, 1967] There were some 585 teachers in California that were receiving $500 a month or less as a schoolteacher. That's less than $6,000 a year to be a schoolteacher. And it seemed so grossly unfair and unjust, just because their board would hold them in that position, that's where they were.

And Dolwig presented this bill. It went through the Education Committee in the senate, went through the Finance Committee in the senate, got on senate floor. Let's see, he lost it on the senate floor because some conservative Democrats and enough Republicans did not support him that Dolwig lost that bill. Hugh Burns was the pro tem at the time. And I thought that it was grossly unfair, a terribly unfair situation. And so I appealed to the chair, to the pro tem, and I asked this question. "Is it possible for a member of the floor to take up another member's bill?" No. One error. I've got to

back up.

The bill went the whole route and to the governor's office, and the governor vetoed the bill. That's what happened. And now comes the day when somebody stands up on the floor--I can't remember whether it was myself or somebody else--who wanted to try to override that veto. And so I asked the question of the chair: "Will this bill be taken up for an override on this floor?" And I looked over at Dolwig, and Dolwig went this way [shaking his head] [Meaning] I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to buck that governor. He is the governor of his party. So then I said to Burns, I said, "If a member will not take up a bill to override the governor's veto, can another member of the senate take that bill, offer it to override the veto?" And Hugh Burns said that a senate bill is the property of the senate. "Yes, you can."

So then I said, "Well, I have a certain amount of time that I can have to take up the veto of this bill. I'd like to confer with Senator Dolwig. I'd like to talk to the governor about this bill, because the governor is making an error in vetoing this bill. He could stand ten feet tall if he would do this (sign the bill). Because in another bill that I

know of, that has gone through the Education Committee and through my subcommittee, the money is there for a school district to use it as they see fit. The governor has already given that money. We are not asking for more money. And let them pay the teachers out of that money." And I was sincere about it. As far as the governor was concerned, he would look great with 585 teachers and not with their board maybe.

DOUGLASS: Was his principal reason that he gave for vetoing that is more money, more expenditures? Or did he give a reason.

STIERN: Yes. He couldn't put more money out. So I asked Dolwig, "Would you arrange it? Would you go with me? Would you go with me down to the governor's office. You don't have to say a word, but I want you to hear what transpires between us." So Dolwig said he would. And he set up a hearing, and I went down. So the day came, and there I was. Reagan sitting at his desk, two people couched on each side of him, his education financial advisers, his director of finance. In walks Dolwig and Stiern. Stiern, a Democrat. Dolwig, a Republican, staunch Republican, who wouldn't even take up the veto. And I said to the governor, I said, "I don't want to put you in the position, I

really don't want to put you in the position of having a veto overriden, but I really think that an attempt will be made to do this. Because if I understand, you say you don't have the extra money to put into the budget for this item. You have already done this. I want to show you where you did it. And I showed him where he did in another bill, where he gave more money to small schools--and mostly these are small mountainous, desert-type schools--that they could use wherever they needed it. "You have already given it to them."

DOUGLASS: In fact, one of those would be salaries.

STIERN: That's right. And I said, "Now, all you've got to do, since you have vetoed this bill, and let's try and block having a veto overridden. Let's take that language, and let's just put it into somebody else's education bill that's germane and bring it through here again. And when you sign that bill, you will have signed this language, and it could happen."

He looked at me, and he said, "Walter, I can't do that." And I said, "Why can't you do that?" I said, "I am trying to show that an honest error has been made." You know, he is always accused of not giving money to this and that and cutting. "You've already generously given small school districts extra money because

they have special kinds of problems, and that could be paid for from this. And with those teachers and with education as a professional fraternity in California, you would stand ten feet tall. You can't lose with this. And I am thinking about those particular teachers who are deserving of that." He said, "Can't do it." I said, "Look. I am a Democrat. I don't want any press on this. I don't want anything that Stiern went out and did this and pressured the governor, and he turned himself around for Senator Stiern and all that kind of thing." I said, "I give you my honorable promise we won't do that. This is just something in this room that we do. Dolwig is here. He can find another bill and slip that section into it, and it can go through the process and nobody will know the difference. They have already authorized the money, and you have already signed the bill. They have the money. All you've got to do is do that." His answer was "No, I won't do that." "Why won't you do that? For what reason?" "Well, if I do it for you, I have to do it for other people, and it goes on and on and on. And so forth and so forth." And that's just dishonest. He had already. . . . He absolutely would not do it.

DOUGLASS: Were there any comments from his educational advisor or his director of finance in this conversation?

STIERN: They just sit there silent, quiet.

DOUGLASS: And he did this monologue, repetitive.

STIERN: And so I said, "Well, I am sorry you feel that way. I think you could do so much by doing that with so much ease. It's not costing you one penny, not one penny. You have already done it. And I can't understand your positioning yourself that way. But if that's the case, I am sure that there is going to be an attempted override of the veto. So we dismissed ourselves and said goodbye, and I went back. And I took it up on the senate floor to override the veto myself. But the bloc--it takes twenty-seven votes--and when you don't have twenty-seven votes in your party, you are not going to get it. But I thought the case had to be made to show the logic of doing that.

DOUGLASS: What was the vote that you finally came up with?

STIERN: Oh, you know, it was close, and my Democrats supported me. None of my Republicans supported, Dolwig wouldn't support. It came out, needing twenty-seven votes, it came out something like twenty-four votes. It was short. [16-16 vote]

DOUGLASS: Was that around 1967 or '68? [September 1967]

STIERN: Yes, it was. So I always found him a very strange man to work with.

DOUGLASS: To what do you attribute that response, on his part?

STIERN: Why he wouldn't back up? Some people have an awfully hard time backing up if you prove something is absolutely correct and right. And I really thought, I said to him, "I really think this helps you. I can't see it is minus for anything that you could do."

DOUGLASS: Do you think his mind was just closed to that kind of logic?

STIERN: It was absolutely closed. He wasn't going to change it.

DOUGLASS: Was it stubbornness?

STIERN: I think so. You know, he would position himself like that.

DOUGLASS: Do you think somebody in his cabinet had advised him to do this?

STIERN: His educational adviser probably did. Who was a man--he had an educational adviser who was a man of academics.

DOUGLASS: I can't think if the name.

STIERN: It was a name like [William] Cunningham, or some such name as that. Had been superintendent of a school system. [Newport Mesa School District] But that man lacked any background in community colleges, universities, state colleges, private

colleges. It was narrow. And he didn't have a lot of. . . . I have always thought that he should have probably had at least four or five people advising them on the various phases of education. Because nobody knows all about all of education. They just don't. And when you have a citizen-governor coming in and he chooses a superintendent of any system in the state, I don't care which one it was, and has only one, that is a limited input. And I was trying to show this to him as being a big thing to do. We could say, "In California, no teacher gets less than $6,000 a year."

DOUGLASS: Was it just an easy answer to give to something he might not have wanted to do?

STIERN: I felt from the time that I started talking to him, you know, that I was just talking to the wall.

Relations with Legislators

DOUGLASS: You have already discussed Pat Brown. So I don't really want to go into that very much, but, in terms of their style in dealing with the legislature, could you just comment on the difference in dealing with Reagan, as contrasted to Brown?

STIERN: Well, governors of my experience, all of them, Brown, Sr., down to the present time, have a

liaison person between their office and the senate and a liaison office between their office and the assembly. And those people do a lot to help them, or feel the tone of things, or to communicate back and forth. I think they have learned that there is a lot to gain by doing that. And usually you can get entree to them. I didn't have any problem getting to Deukmejian. Just ask him. I gave him some forewarning of time, you know. I couldn't call and say, "Could you see me this afternoon?" necessarily. But if I said, "Could you see you in the next seventy-two hours or so?," usually it could be worked in. They are adaptable to doing that.

DOUGLASS: How was Reagan on that?

STIERN: Reagan was worse because Reagan was a nine-to-five governor. He came in to the building at nine and he left at five. And that was it. And it was just like clockwork. If you were in the basement, there was a special order there from the governor's office, and they'd pull the state car, and then they'd put a state police car in front and back of it. And he'd come down the elevator, get in his car, and from five to 5:10, he was gone out of there. And you didn't see him again until the next morning at nine o'clock. He was very isolated.

One area that was extremely difficult to work with him on was the area of mental health and mental health hospitals. And I worked with legislation in that field, in which we did everything conceivable to call attention to some of the problems. And he didn't want to see it. He didn't want to see the hospitals. He didn't want to visit them. We even went to the Women's Club of Auburn and tried to have them invite Nancy Reagan up to Auburn so that we could pull up to DeWitt Mental Hospital or at least maybe she would see it and talk to him. We did everything under the sun and never, ever got him into a mental hospital.

DOUGLASS: And did you get her in?

STIERN: Never. Never. She didn't participate at all in Sacramento. It is amazing what she is doing in Washington. She wasn't even interested. You know, governor's wives always participate with legislative wives on different things. She is (Mrs. Deukmejian) invited and occasionally will come. Nancy Reagan never did.

DOUGLASS: Did not.

STIERN: No, no. I know this because June [Stiern] was president of the wives. She knew that Nancy never attended.

DOUGLASS: All the other governor's wives had been responsive about that?

STIERN: Always, always. Invited you to their home if you were a senator's wife or to go to things once in awhile with people.

DOUGLASS: So between the two of them, they were very isolated, it sounds like.

STIERN: Very isolated.

DOUGLASS: Well, was he, do you think, doing that to reinforce this stereotype of being a citizen-governor?

Misrepresentation of State Finances and Failure to Understand Postsecondary Education Plans

STIERN: I think so. I really do. And, of course, the largest. . . . I have to tell you this because we are talking about this, and it is a good point to make it.

The thing I could never forgive Ronald Reagan for to this day, because he still says it to this day, and that is the statement he made which is absolutely false, and he knows it's false. He is not so stupid that he doesn't know that it is a false statement. But he makes it and makes it anyway, even if you sat down and showed him the total error of what he says, he still will make the statement. I cannot forgive this man for this. Of all the things that I know about Ronald Reagan, this is the worst. Because he used it when he went to national politics, and he used it, using California as a

whipping boy to do it.

When Ronald Reagan was elected to office, there was something he never could comprehend. He told people the state was in debt. It was up to debt to its ears, and he came in as a citizen-governor and he balanced the budget. And he got it on track again with his philosophy and theology and politics and everything else. And "that's what I want to do in Washington, D. C." And that's what he says when he goes to meetings. He tells people. . . . If I've heard it once, I've heard it fifty times, Ronald Reagan on national broadcast, "The State of California was in debt up to its eyes when I took it over, and when I left, we had balanced the budget and everything was hunky-dory. And that's what we are going to do in Washington. And that's what I am going to do with the debt and everything else." And we have a bigger debt today than we have ever had in the history of the nation, for all administrations in history rolled up together.

That was false! It's a lie. It's not true. I lived through it. The Master Plan. The Coordinating Council [on Higher Education]. The fifteen-year span from 1960 to 1975, I introduced a bill on reevaluating community

colleges and taking a look at state colleges and universities which had [James W.] Nielsen support, a Republican who wanted to put that part on it. Because we knew exactly what we were doing. The truth of the matter is we knew in 1959, at the time Pat Brown was governor, that if we did this, that we were faced with this problem. Knowing where every child was from kindergarten up, we knew that if we were to handle them at the college level, we would not be ready for that. We had to double higher education in California in fifteen years. Double the sites. Double the faculty. Double the microscopes. Double the libraries. Get all the help we could from private colleges and universities. Make junior colleges carry their unfair share of the freshman-sophomore load. And everything else.

And if we did this at no cost to the taxpayer, without going out and making an extra tax to the taxpayer, it would come from bonds. And it would come from bond money, and it would come from loans that would be lent to us by the Public Employees Retirement System, by the State Teachers Retirement System, by the bridge funds that were a part of the highway system. By everything we could find where money was being accumulated to pay retired employees and

money was invested. And the state took their monies into this plan. It was actuarially sound to do so. And in fifteen years, by 1975, we could do it, and it wouldn't cost people a cent. We knew that going in. We knew it going out. We knew where it was going to be. We knew it would take fifteen years. We knew where the money was coming from. All the people that were running this money, they figured they couldn't give it to a safer person than lend it to the state while they were doing that. And that's what we did.

Boom! [slapping his hands] Comes Reagan in office. What [year], 19. . . .

DOUGLASS: In 1966 [elected].

STIERN: In 1966. And he looks at this thing, and he doesn't understand it. He doesn't research it. He doesn't go into the background of the thing. He doesn't read to the economics of how we put this thing together. And so "this state is in debt up to its ears, you can't believe the indebtedness of this state. And I inherit this mess from Pat Brown. And the Democrats have been in power. And they are up to their ears in debt, and look what I have here. And the first thing I have to do, I have got to raise taxes to get us out of this debt indebtedness." And

"Senator Deukmejian, will you?" And he said, "Yes, I will." "Will you carry the largest tax bill in the history of California, over a billion dollars." In other words, Ronald Reagan was responsible for the largest tax bill in California, which almost is laughable in light of what he says and does. And, to this day, over and over and over [clapping his hands], on speeches at the national level, he makes this. And that is an outright lie.

DOUGLASS: So the basis for that statement is the bond issue?

STIERN: That is exactly what it is. And that was the indebtedness, the indebtedness that we had committed ourselves to. Republicans and Democrats alike in both houses, in committees of both houses, in Education and Finance, and a governor who signed it so that we could be prepared to do all that. And that's how the University of California developed the campus at Santa Cruz, at Santa Barbara, at Riverside, at Irvine, at San Diego. All those good things. And that's how we got Stanislaus State, Dominguez Hills State, Sonoma State, Cal State Bakersfield, extensions of schools from agriculture and basic things at Davis into schools with full-fledged law schools and everything else. All those things that were

done came from that move. And that man, to this day, will misquote this thing over and over. I don't know how you forgive a person for a thing like that.

DOUGLASS: What you are really saying is that you don't think he ever did. . . . Did he ever try to understand it or come to understand it?

STIERN: No. He either never understood it or never read it. Or he distorted it intentionally. And I don't know how else you could say it.

DOUGLASS: Yes. He did take that nationally, certainly.

STIERN: And he will still do that to this day. It is not uncommon for him. I have listened to him give commencement addresses to universities, where he would talk about how you have to watch bureaucrats, they get you in debt and you have to get out. "I inherited this mess and pulled us out. I didn't have the background of any office that I ever held." You know, he is not well enough read to make a statement like that. But if he did read and did know what happened, he could not say that because it was absolutely actuarially sound or we would never have walked into it. We would have never got the loans from those people, and we could not have done what. . . . And, to me, the greatest thing that has been done, in my knowledge of the legislature,

is that action in which we did, at the end of fifteen years, double the postsecondary educational facilities in the state.

And people have come from all over this country and from all over the world to see how it works and why it works and to try to emulate it. And we have had people from Jamaica and the Netherlands and Great Britain and Canada, everywhere, come and see how it works. Because it was such a wonderful thing to have happen.

DOUGLASS: And I think you commented when I first arrived, but not on the tape, about the fact that it took all sectors, the private and the public, to meet this need.

STIERN: It did.

DOUGLASS: But [you said] there were people in the legislature who had blinders on, in a sense, about anything private. I would like you to comment on that.

STIERN: Yes. There are people who are catalystic [sic] in the way they cause things to happen. Most people are not aware of some of the activities of the legislature that are not visible. You can't see it if you are visiting, from the gallery. You can't see it by just looking at the operation. It's a way they actually think. On this case, in the separation of church and state, what you are talking about basically

there is public schools and the position of the public school as being totally separated from religious schools. And in some very strong, influential groups, this is a very, very important factor.

And one of the people who has championed this through the years is the Masonic Order. They have been very, very strong through the years. You know, they attend dedication of schools. They put things in cornerstone boxes. They watchdog this kind of thing very, very close. And when you have Masonic members in the legislature, they are going to be doing that. And one of these people who does this, and he does it, he doesn't deny that he a thirty-third degree Mason, he is, and he is a watchdog on this (separation of church and state) is Senator Ralph C. Dills of Los Angeles County. And he will arise and point out that this is not in the constitutional fabric in California or the nation to do this. Quick on his feet. And he has people that he lead, that will follow him on that. There are a number of Masonic people in the legislature.

By the same token, there are people who see the advantage to private colleges and universities who are people who pay taxes, just

like everybody else, whether they are on faculties or whether administration, or whether. Whether they are church oriented or not church oriented. They may be labor oriented or they may be oriented some other way. Maybe just a private school. Basically, way back, if you go to many of them, they were religiously oriented, like USC [University of Southern California] was Methodist at one time, you know. But there are a lot of Catholic schools. I don't know the orientation on the Claremont complex, but there may have been some of that because in the early days a lot of denominations worked at getting colleges and academies started, as they called them in those days.

But you do have this problem. Now I see, as a medically oriented person myself, I can see Loma Linda University Medical School being beneficial to California, and the University of Southern California's Medical School and Stanford's Medical School advantageous to Californians, just as the same as I see the medical schools on the five UC campuses in the UC system. But some people will not do that. Cannot see that, and will have nothing to do with that use of state monies for private education facilities.

One of the examples is if you look at the

disproportion of law schools in public institutions in California. In all of southern California, south of the Tehachapis, there is a law school at the University of California, Los Angeles, but that's it. And all the rest are private law schools. If you want to go to law school, you have to go to a private law school if you are in southern California. I can see the problem then. I can see why some of the schools. . . . You know, UC Santa Barbara would love to have a law school, UC San Diego would love to have a law school, and I can see the logic of that. But you have those two factors always at work, the private school against the public school.

DOUGLASS: For clarification, let me ask you, did Senator Dills differentiate among the private schools? Because, let's take Pomona College. It was originally Congregational but has no religious orientation now. Or a Stanford or a USC? Does he consider those all private schools?

STIERN: Yes. You have to be very careful. You don't put public funds into private schools.

DOUGLASS: Any private schools.

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: So how does that relate to the church-state thing? Because there may be no religious

affiliation. It is clear in the case of a Catholic college, but I mean it isn't always clear.

STIERN: Well, it just happened to be this same thing. It is a private organization using taxpayers' money.

DOUGLASS: Okay. So it's a very rigid definition.

STIERN: It's a great division. It is. You want to go to a private school, that's fine.

DOUGLASS: They don't see them as playing a role in satisfying the overall needs of higher education in the state, in other words?

STIERN: I don't know that I would say they don't see the advantages of that. But they certainly don't see giving them public funds. It always crops up. And sometime when you are in the state senate and the prayer is the opening of the session, listen very, very carefully. Because at the end of the chaplain's prayer, you will hear people say "Amen." But you will hear a number of people who say something that sounds like "Somotis Be," and that is a Masonic term. They say "Amen." They say, "Somotis Be." Now if you are quick at that, you can hear where the Masonic members are. And when James Mills was pro tem in the senate, he sat right behind me. When the chaplain was finished with his prayer,

he would often say, "Somotis Be." Those men believe so strongly in what they believe in that it's a factor. I'm not to judge that.

I am a person who has never in life and never will be, never have, and I've fought it all the way, of belonging to a fraternal order. It just isn't in my makeup. In college, I was the anti-fraternity man. I balked. I don't think you have to be a member of Sigma Chi in order to amount to something in this world, and I used to tell people that. By the same way, I never joined a fraternal order and never have. I have had people want me to. Most fraternal orders, you have to ask to join. They don't want to be in a position of asking you to join. And I never felt it was absolutely necessary that I had to do that. And so it doesn't trouble me. You know, there are a lot of things that fraternal orders do that I like, but I don't think I have to have it to be calm with myself and at ease with myself.

DOUGLASS: And politically, you didn't feel it was something you were going to do?

STIERN: No. And I saw something one time that I never thought I would see. I saw the dedication of a building at Richcrest, California. I felt good about it because it was the only time in my

entire life I have ever seen it happen, and I have attended a lot of cornerstone layings and a lot of dedications and the first shovelful of dirt being turned over. I can't tell you how many of those things I have gone through. And I was at Ridgecrest, California when a courts building ground was being broken, and here was a swarm of Masons with their little aprons on and their little hats on and their paraphenalia on, standing on one side. And, on other side, with the navy-type uniforms, were the Knights of Columbus, with their ceremonial swords and their caps and hats and everything, standing there too. I have only seen that once in my life happen. So maybe we are getting over it to some degree. And people see the logic that public buildings, particularly educational institutions are good for everybody.

DOUGLASS: Have you been active in a church here in Bakersfield?

STIERN: I have not been active in recent years, just because it (the legislature) has been so time-consuming. I have been busy with everything under the sun, being in different parts of the state. I have attended church on occasion in Sacramento. As a child, I was raised in the Methodist Church. And I know that my little local Methodist church that I was raised in here

would like to see me there more often than I am there. But I have tried to be as tolerant with all denominations and with all faiths and religions that I can, as a learning process. And I have been absent from my own membership church for years because I have been running up and down the state doing other things that were the state's business.

In this kind of a life, you have no time to yourself. You cannot drive three hundred miles in an automobile to Bakersfield because the plane connections are bad between Bakersfield and Sacramento. You cannot do that every weekend. And once you get to Bakersfield, which is your pivot, where the mass population is, to service three other counties and be in Pasadena and San Bernardino County and Kings County and do other commitments you are asked to do. Commencement addresses at Marin, commencement addresses in other ends of the state and all around. And have time to do things like attend your home church. It is absolutely impossible.

XIII. GOVERNORS GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN AND EDUMUND G. BROWN, JR.

George Deukmejian

DOUGLASS: Since you brought up Deukmejian, why don't we discuss him as governor and any relationships that you have, so we can stay on this track.

First of all, you had known him, of course, in the senate. And he was on a committee with you, or more than one committee. First, let's talk about him as a fellow committee member, as a fellow senator, what kinds of experiences you had with him, and then take it up as the governor.

STIERN: Yes. By nature, I think of George Deukmejian as being very conservative. He's a very sober person. He takes everything very seriously. I can't fault that at all. He is well read. He is an intelligent man. He is an easterner. He is a New Yorker originally, who found himself in California eventually. I think he is well prepared in that he knows how to read a budget, and he knows the legislative process. And most governors do not know that when they take office as governors. And, therefore, often have trouble with the legislature. But Deukmejian has been an assemblyman for, I think, eight years. He was in the senate for eight years. He was the attorney general of the state for eight years. He is in his second term as governor.

He has some points of view that are difficult for me to understand or accept. But that's just differences in the philosophical

position, I think, of a person who accepts the Republican platform of things and one who chooses to be a Democrat.

I know that he has deepest respect for me. He knows that I have the deepest respect for him. That's the funny thing that my brother loves to play with. And, although, I don't agree with him with everything, I know that he has thought it out well, that he has read it well, and that he has gone to good advice. He doesn't just shoot from his hip.

DOUGLASS: How would you characterize his activities in the senate when he was there?

STIERN: Well, he was very conservative. And he was a ramrod for Reagan, when Reagan was in office in those years. Carried much of the Reagan administration's program. Was the floor leader on the floor for the republican Party.

I will never forget a speech that that man made. I have it on tape if you ever want it. I am not even sure he has a copy of it. I will give him a copy of it some day. When George [R.] Moscone was executed by Mr. [Dan] White--George Moscone was the Democratic floor leader on the senate floor--and that was such a shock to the state senate to have that happen that in eulogizing George Moscone, different members stood up on the floor and said different things.

And George Deukmejian stood up on the floor and made a speech that will not soon be forgotten by people who heard it. And I have it on a recorded tape. In that speech, there is a place where he stops and he can't proceed because he was actually weeping. [with emotion] And senate just hung on. I'll never forget that moment. It was a terrible, terrible moment. And everybody in the room knew what was going through Deukmejian's mind and why he couldn't go on. He stood there at his microphone fifty seconds and didn't say a word and then continued on. And his speech was built around the fact that although George Moscone and he are far apart in their philosophical position, this man when he was in here as floor leader in this senate, kept Deukmejian pushed to his maximum to pull for his own party. That was the kind of quality he had, although the way it was used philosophically we were poles apart. And that speech is something I think I am going to lend it to you.

DOUGLASS: That's fascinating.

[End of Tape 6, Side A]

[Begin Tape 6, Side B]

STIERN: I personally had wanted to catch some of these on tape, and one of the women in my office threw

the machine on--you know, there is a squawk box in all of the offices--and maybe I can reproduce this. I think alone, since the man who did it is a man who became a very serious governor himself, it shows you a quality about George Deukmejian that is so human. And so when you hear all these nasty things. You hear about, he doesn't care about people, he doesn't care about the underdog, and he is wiping out all those things that were forged to help the poor. This cannot be true of a man whose parents were Armenian immigrants to this country. You know, in the basic fabric of the man, he's a good person. His philosophy is not mine totally, but I hold nothing but the deepest respect for him. I just cannot run out at banquets and Democratic events and drive him into the ground as being, you know, just an uncaring, sloppy, two-faced person who doesn't have concern for the citizens and the children of California. I just can't do that because I know different.

DOUGLASS: He was on the Revenue and Taxation Committee. How was he in committee operations? Was he quiet, or was he active?

STIERN: He was quiet, but he was active. And he always was of great value to the committee. I championed having him on there because he was a

quality member. He gave balance to the committee.

DOUGLASS: He spoke up.

STIERN: He did.

DOUGLASS: Were you surprised when he was elected governor?

STIERN: Let's see, the first time, he ran against. . . .

DOUGLASS: He beat Bradley.

STIERN: He beat Bradley the first time. No. That did not surprise me because I know there is enough racism and prejudice in California that it would be very, very difficult for a black man to become governor of California.

DOUGLASS: But were you surprised that he ran for governor? Deukmejian?

STIERN: No. I expected that he would.

DOUGLASS: Because he has been portrayed as kind of a quiet, introspective person. And I wondered how he would do out in the hustings. What your view would be of how he would do?

STIERN: Exactly. His enemies, and Democrats, say that he is a caretaker governor of California who doesn't come up with any new programs, doesn't come up with new ideas, just keeps taking care of California. I don't think you can say that's true. The state continues to grow in number, which creates its problems to a greater degree. It creates greater stresses, and he has to cope with that as he takes his era.

DOUGLASS: You commented that you had access to him pretty quickly, if you needed to talk to him as governor.

STIERN: Sure. If I called his office right now and said, "You know, I know the governor is busy and I know he is in different parts of the state, but would it be possible to talk to him within a week," he would be probably calling me back within two or three days.

DOUGLASS: Did he ever call you in?

STIERN: Yes. He has done that. He has asked my opinion about certain things. I remember one thing before I went out of office was on a bill that he was being asked to sign. And I was asking him to veto it because it was so wrong. It was so wrong medically. It was being championed by a senator who was a friend of the owner of the Altadena Dairies in Los Angeles County. And the state had all kinds of problems with Altadena Dairy. The owner of the Altadena Dairy and one of the senators in the senate are extremely close friends. And this senator has a clout all of his own, with both parties, and will spring to this dairy's defense.

DOUGLASS: Who is that?

STIERN: William Campbell, Senator William Campbell. And William Campbell will swing to their defense,

although William Campbell doesn't know one iota of what he is talking about in the bacteriology of the problems of this dairy. But he will do so on the basis of his friendship and that people have a right to sell what they want, and so forth and so.

DOUGLASS: This is over raw milk, right?

STIERN: It's over raw milk, and it's over salmonella, which has different genuses. And this particular one is called salmonella dublini. The state has proven contamination over and over. The Los Angeles Health Commission is sitting in between with a powerful thing in their county. But Altadena milk is sold all over California. It's sold in Sacramento and Contra Costa, Fresno, Bakersfield, it's sold everywhere. So it is going past its own borders of Los Angeles, and the attempts to allow that dairy to continue with animals that are known to be contaminated is incredible to the medical world.

Yet where is the champion to watch that. I was that person. I would always have to spring to my feet and do the best I could to explain why you should not do this. In the last effort of Senator William Campbell to protect Altadena Dairy, he proposed to eliminate salmonella from the prohibited list. There is, in the codes of

California, a list of diseases where any milk that has any of those diseases in it is not allowed to be sold in California. And that, of course, includes the things that you would imagine, like tuberculosis and brucellosis. But it also includes salmonella.

So he put it in a bill to remove salmonella, to delete a section of the present code and say there were now only ten diseases that would prohibit milk from being sold, instead of eleven. So he wipes out salmonella as a dangerous disease just by a stroke of the pen and making that one piece obsolete in state code, while people die in Illinois and everywhere else in the United States from salmonella. And we know what salmonella does. Anybody knows that. The medical world, the veterinary world, the public health world, the bacteriological world. They know what that is. If they (Altadena) want to sell that milk, then they should pasteurize it. If they want to sell both kinds of milk, that's okay. I have no fight with that. But don't sell raw milk with a disease in it which is on the forbidden list of what you can have in raw milk.

And in my last legislative battle, I lost. I am telling this story because it is an

illustration of something. I lost. I did everything that I could in the committee that I was on, but there are all kinds of reasons why people will not vote for what seems educationally prudent. Sometimes it's even gifts that are made at election time by people, and you never know whether people are influenced by that kind of thing or not. I never know if they are or not. I don't know what the motivations are that would make somebody go for that and supporting diseased milk out of a dairy, rather than go for what is accepted truth. So I was down to the wire. The bill was on the governor's desk, and he was being asked to sign it. Boy, you can imagine the pressure that was on him by William Campbell and all the people, being the leader he is in the Republican party in California. Southern California, Los Angeles pressures, dairy pressures, everybody who was a distributor, the Los Angeles clout and everything else, on that governor to sign that bill.

And I remember writing a letter. It was brief. It was about four paragraphs long. And I wrote it, and I hand delivered it to the governor's office. And I said, "I have done everything I can to stop this bill. As a veterinarian with the background I have, having

had a dairy practice, having served in the military buying tons and tons and tons and tons and tons of milk and meat and pork and beef and everything for the military, I know this to be true. I am not asking you to take my word for it, Governor Deukmejian. I am asking you to make some checks. Pick up your telephone and talk to the University of Wisconsin, talk to the University of Michigan, talk to the University of New York, talk to any substantial institution that has any kind of a medical school or bacteriological school or a public health section, and listen to what they have to say. Don't just listen to Walt Stiern."

DOUGLASS: And did he do it?

STIERN: And he did it. And the veto message came out, "I veto this bill," and he lifted right out of my letter a paragraph in his veto message of why he vetoed that bill. And they were caught on their own pitard. How do you override your own governor's veto? And Stiern won by a gnat's eyebrow.

The reason I took the time to tell you that story is that he did do his homework. You cannot go to the top sources of the U.S. Health Department and the control stations and the quarantine stations and meat inspection and milk

inspection and the experts of these fields in universities and colleges and veterinary schools and medical schools and not find that that is fact. And to go against that, I think, is a poor thing to do.

DOUGLASS: Had you lost that fight in the Public Health and Safety Committee?

STIERN: Yes, in the policy committee. And then I lost it on the senate floor. It went through the assembly and went on through. And, you know, Campbell was giggling all over the place. It was the first time he had done this, and he had lost it on other occasions. Plus the California Medical Association was doing what they could to assist me. The California Veterinary Medical Association was doing what they could. And they were doing everything they could to . . .

DOUGLASS: That certainly shows the power of that faction, if you can take a public health issue . . .

STIERN: It is unbelievable what one man in the legislature can do if he is bent on doing it.

DOUGLASS: And it passed the assembly.

STIERN: It passed the assembly. Passed their committees. "Sure, good old Bill Campbell, why should we turn him down?" He does it telling a funny story. He is full of funny stories. He is full of one-liners, just like Ronald Reagan. So when it gets down there, at least George

[Deukmejian] read my letter. And this had to go through his mind: "Walter Stiern is out of this field. He is trained in milk inspection. He is trained in bacteriology, parasitology, had five years in the military and public health, he was involved in these things." He told me he did. He said, "I talked to people at the University of Michigan. I talked to people at the University of Wisconsin."

DOUGLASS: He spoke to you personally about it later?

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: I will try to get you now to compare Reagan and Deukmejian. It's interesting because, as you said, Deukmejian subcribes to a lot of Reagan's political beliefs. But would this be a case in which the fact that Deukmejian had served in the senate and knew you, whereas Ronald Reagan never served in the state legislature, didn't know you, would this have something to do with how they would respond to those situations?

STIERN: Well, I think Deukmejian knows me much better than Ronald Reagan.

DOUGLASS: No. But I meant because Deukmejian had been a senator--Ronald Reagan had no legislative experience--doesn't that affect how a governor approaches these questions?

STIERN: Yes. I think a better way to put it, from my

standpoint, is that in the eight years that George Deukmejian was in the senate and the time he was in the assembly too, I think he developed a deep respect for me. He felt I would not do things wrong.

DOUGLASS: But he knew you personally.

STIERN: Yes. That's right. And it would be hard for him to think that I would go to that effort to mislead him.

DOUGLASS: Let me push it one step further. What I am saying is--there may be two questions here. If Ronald Reagan had served in the senate and known you, maybe he would have thought differently when you spoke to him. On the other hand, do you think that wouldn't have mattered, given his particular approach to politics?

STIERN: I think the difference is that I don't think of Deukmejian lying to me. I have not been lied to by George Deukmejian. And truth is very important to me. And I cannot condone a person lying to me. I have been lied to by Ronald Reagan, and I have been lied about by Ronald Reagan. In my own campaigns. Nationally, condemning the legislature for what they did, creating debts for higher education.

DOUGLASS: So is there a difference in the modus apparendi?

STIERN: They are two different men. They are two different men. They are fields apart. I don't

think that George Deukmejian would do something, himself, for expediency, for George Deukmejian. I am not saying he might not get in situations where, as the titular head of the Republican party in California, that he might not get pushed into situations that he might like to associate himself with. But he wouldn't do it for his own gain. I am sure of that.

Where in the case of Ronald Reagan, he will go out of his way to say something that is false. When you show an official document of how a man votes and you publicize it as just the opposite, for whatever you own personal gain is, that is one of the differences between the two men.

[Pause for lunch]

Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr.

DOUGLASS: Senator Stiern, you had commented a little bit in the first interview about the modus apparendi of Jerry Brown as governor. But I'd like to maybe get a little more specific. What actual contacts did you have with him when he became governor? Or as secretary of state?

STIERN: I didn't have very much contact with him at all when he was secretary of state. You know, secretary of state is an office that is like a super-county clerk. There are fifty-eight

counties, and you have county clerks in counties; and you have a secretary of state, which is kind of like a super-clerk. And, really, the secretary of state has so many people, deputies, doing the work that they can float around. And they can campaign and build their name up and get known. I think that is partly the way that Jerry Brown used the secretary of state's office. He had been on the board of trustees of the Los Angeles Community College, and that's all the background he really had. Which is not a lot of background for becoming governor.

He was innovative and had a lot of new ideas. He was a shock to the traditional politician in Sacramento. He saw a lot of things that he thought were wrong, and he wanted to change them just as fast as he could do it. And that met with obstacles at times. And I think some of the things. . . . I really think, as I look back on it at this point, that in the future people will see some of the things he was suggesting and probing and throwing out for consideration that a lot of people hadn't thought about at all. And in some ways maybe he was before his time. There are certain things that you have to give him due credit for.

One was that he certainly gave minorities a

chance. And when we say that, we say women as minorities. That women, that blacks and Hispanics and Orientals and Native American Indians and handicapped persons who you never expected to be doing certain things were put in positions to do things. And he opened that whole field up, probably more than all the governors in the history of California combined behind him. When you see a person coming in to testify before a committee who is laying out in a semi- almost mid-attitude situation in a wheelchair who is also being kept alive by an oxygen sysem attached to the wheelchair and is the head of a department in Sacramento on rehabilitation, it is the kind of thing you never saw until Jerry Brown came along with that kind of an idea to do that.

DOUGLASS: Did you have any particular personal encounters with Brown, as governor?

STIERN: I didn't have any personal ones. On occasion, he would seek me out and ask my opinion of something. And when he did it, I almost felt like it was bouncing something off of me to see how an older person would feel about a thing like that.

DOUGLASS: Would he call you and ask you to come into his office?

STIERN: Yes. He would even come up to my office. And we went out and had dinner together at a hotcake house one night just to kick a couple of things around. And that's not the kind of usual thing you do with a governor. You never knew what he would do. One time he just walked into my office, and he wanted to know if I had a few minutes to talk to him about something he wanted to bounce off me he felt I knew something about. And yet I was enough older than he that I wasn't really in his group. You know, he had a lot of people in his own age group, or within ten years of his age group. Where here I was, probably--well, I know where I am--I am ten years junior to his father. So he had to think of me as an older man.

You could talk with him. He was an approachable person. But he was always exploring and examining different things. I was surprised the first time I walked into his inner office and saw how drab and how unpretentious it was, for the office of the chief executive of the state of California. But that was just Jerry Brown. Just like driving the old, blue Plymouth that he drove. He didn't want to live in any mansion. He wanted an apartment across from the capitol where he could run back and forth. That was it. There never was a more

unconventional person. Have you seen these portraits in Sacramento, with the governors of California, hanging on the wall?

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: Have you ever seen the one of Jerry Brown, Jr.? It looks like a Barnum & Bailey Circus picture. The unexpected is what you would find with Jerry Brown. And yet he had some way. . . . I am sure the charisma of his father had something to do with his election. Because he was not terribly well known. The name carried across, of Edumnd Brown, to Jerry Brown. And he had really not distinguished himself too much, other than he had been on the board of the community college in Los Angeles. He was a student, becoming, I believe, a Jesuit.

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: And he then ran for secretary of state and had that for four years. And that's all he had going for him when he ran for governor. And so the fact that he was elected was kind of startling. And then after he was elected, people were kind of startled with the kind of a person that he was.

DOUGLASS: As you are looking at it as a senator, expecting a governor to at least present legislation or present things he is interested in, how did he

come across on that score? In terms of you as a Democratic party senator, did it seem like your governor was presenting a program, like in education or just take any field? Did he seem to have an agenda, in the positive sense of agenda?

STIERN: He always struck me as trying to represent a lot of people who were never represented, who had no voice in government, the silent persons that had no one to represent them. The farm laborer, the field worker, the non-English speaking person. This included children, the needs of children that are not always well cared for, taken care of. He was trying to go farther than what the platforms might have been of the Democratic party. He probably was a Democrat because it fit him more than the Republican philosophical position. I think that's where it ended. That's why he was an individualist. If there had been something out there that could have been different, he would have tried that because it fit his concept and ideas. We had an example when he wanted California to buy a piece of Telstar so that it could operate in the world market better than it did. And he was willing to put five billion into that from the state of California funds for what that would mean for California. This is not the kind of thing that

governors think about, as a rule. It's way out of step.

DOUGLASS: Did he remember you from the days when his father was governor, do you think?

STIERN: He may have. Although, as I told you, the governor used to invite people over to the mansion for dinner occasionally, and he would be in the background. He wouldn't converse and didn't talk. It was condescending just to watch. I think he felt that too much emphasis was put on tradition and age and ways of doing things, rather than being innovative and trying new ideas and getting youth involved, and people who had never had any voice in government at all.

XIV. COMMITTEE SERVICE

Revenue and Taxation Committee

DOUGLASS: Okay. Well, I think that pretty well covers Brown. Why don't we go back to where we started much earlier. And I would like to pick up on 1967, when a couple of things happened. One set of things was very important in terms of your career, and that was you were made chairman of the Revenue and Taxation Committee. You were also appointed to the Finance Committee, and to the Governmental Efficiency Committee. First of all, how did that come about, the chairmanship?

STIERN: Well, I chaired the Revenue and Taxation Committee for eight years. Those were the Reagan years, the years that Reagan was governor. I didn't have a lot of experience and knowledge in revenue and taxation.

DOUGLASS: That's a very, very key position. How did you happen to get the appointment?

STIERN: There are probably several factors. One is it's a dangerous committee to chair, politically, because, in the minds of a lot of people, when I say, "I'm Walter Stiern, I chair the Revenue and Taxation Committee," the person that hears me says, "Oh-ho, so this is the guy that puts all these taxes and things and takes my income and dreams up all kinds of things." And some people don't want it. And another thing, it is an absolute hard-work committee. It is. Don't ever take that committee if you want to be fooling around and having a good time and socializing. Because the burden of it is that every time you sit down to chair it, you have to know what the issues are, even if the members of your committee have not even picked up the agenda to see what you were going to handle that day. And what's the background and what's the source of reason for it? Who opposes it? Who supports it?

You get shocked by things that you can't

believe. Like the tax on liquor is practically nothing, and we are going to keep it that way in this state. For example, if I were to tell people, "Do you realize what the tax on wine is in California?" The tax on wine is one cent per gallon. And if you want to bring that up to two cents per gallon, you would be fighting every liquor interest in the state, and you are just not going to do it. But you have to learn why it's that way. Or why is there no tax on candy? Why is there low tax on liquor? Why was there not tax on bourbon in storage? Why is there no tax on citrus trees and nut trees? Why is there no tax on fertilizers and soil improving things? Why is there no tax on cartons? And why are there taxes on other things?

The problem in revenue and taxation, I can tell you having done it, you come off the committee after the end of eight years, and you say, "The whole fabric of revenue and taxation in California should be redone, because it has been riddled by people with lobbyists who have gotten and gotten. And special interest gets what they want, and other people don't get what they want." And it's a mess. It's in shambles, really. And there are so many things that should have taxes on them and be proper

revenue to the state that do not because special interest people have worked it that way, and that it is extremely disappointing.

DOUGLASS: Did you have any direct confrontations from the liquor industry, or experiences, while you were chair?

STIERN: Oh, sure.

DOUGLASS: Could you recount one or two that seemed outstanding?

STIERN: The most dangerous one I had, politically, was right in my own county. As you know, Kern County is a big agricultural county. In fact, I dubbed my committee. . . . I told people, "This is not the Revenue and Taxation Committee. This is the Committee on Deductions and Exemptions. This is not a Revenue and Taxation Committee." Why should people not pay their fair share of taxes? Why should people that have motion picture film in storage in Burbank which is worth enormous amounts of money not pay one single tax on that? It isn't personal property. Why should a ship come into a harbor in Long Beach and pay for paint and rope and toilet paper and canvas and everything else that you use on a ship, and they don't pay a penny sales tax? Why do airplane lines that bridge from one state to another come in and out of here and pay no taxes to the state of California? Why should

people produce bourbon and never pay any tax on bourbon while it is in storage twenty years with dust all over the bottles because they are exempt from taxes?

I would say, "That's wrong. What people pay, across-the-board, should be even for everybody." Well, one day, here is a bill, carried in the legislature by a Kern County assemblyman, whose name was [William M.] Bill Ketchum (he's deceased now, he went to congress and he is deceased),[1] that you shouldn't have to pay taxes on seed potatoes. Kern County is one of the biggest potato producing counties in the United States. All my committee was looking down to the chair like this, "Are you going sing the same song?" And I did, with the Kern County Farm Bureau and everybody there. I said, "You know, just because you buy seed potatoes, a piece of a potato with an eye in it, and you plant that and it becomes a potato plant. You grow potatoes. Just because you grow seed potatoes, why should you be exempt from taxes on that?" "I don't see it. Or the containers you put them in, the gunnysack. As a veterinarian, when I dispense tablets in vial or a pill box or an envelope, I pay tax on that as a container.

1. Served in the assembly from 1967 to 1972.

Or a pint bottle of medicine for taking care of a horse or cow. But if it is a burlap sack or a carton or something, farmers don't have to pay taxes for that. I don't understand that."

DOUGLASS: How did your Kern County people take this?

STIERN: Well, it was a hard vote because it's an agricultural county. They didn't like the chairman of the committee making speeches like that and trying to ding that bill. But I did those things, and pretty soon I had eight years of that, and that was enough. Because people are going to do what they want in this country.

One of the basic lessons I have learned is that if this does not change, California has got a big problem. We are going to have to sit down with a commission like the Little Hoover Commission, or we are going have to sit down with some group and figure out, and start right from--not put bandaids all over things and limp along--but get down to something that makes sense with the way that you collect taxes and everything else for the cost of a growing, large state with enormous needs.

DOUGLASS: I was wondering if you had an example of lobbying, since you were the chair, not in the committee, but in private. What kinds of approaches would, say, the liquor lobby make any kind if it looked like a threat, for instance,

that someone wanted to raise that tax? Or did things even get to the point where someone would threaten to put a tax on? Raise that sales tax, or the tax on liquor?

STIERN: Well, some of these taxes are almost considered a sacred thing, you know.

DOUGLASS: In other words, did they pinpoint you? Were you conscious of being approached and talked to by them in you office, or wherever?

STIERN: Well, you know, when you say it doesn't make sense to have the low tax you have on alcoholic beverages, well, you have got the Wine Institute on you, and every company that you can think of that has anything to do with the wine business in California. Well, California is big in the wine business, and they can bring a lot of power to bear.

DOUGLASS: So how did they bring that power to bear on you, is what I want to know. I mean they must have felt you were an important person to communicate with. How did they do it?

STIERN: Oh, they would come and talk to you and show you how to play their violin and sing songs about how tragic it is and the implication of subsidized wine production in Italy and Portugal and Spain, and what that did to California wineries and how difficult it was. And that it

(the tax) had to be put on top of an (on-sale) alcoholic drink, the working man's delight was to be able to have beer and wine and things like this, who could not afford the more expensive products, and "how can you do this to us?" "You were denied support agriculturally." I didn't have Farm Bureau support in this county.

DOUGLASS: Oh, you didn't.

STIERN: No. I never had Farm Bureau support. And I didn't have it, and so that includes all the wine producers, all the grape producers, and all this kind of thing. And it comes that way. You know, talk about Mrs. Gutcher, she loved to talk about the Farm Bureau "supporting me, not this man. He has been twenty-four years in an agricultural county. He is not looking out for us. I am looking out for us. Wouldn't you expect more than that from somebody from Kern County after all this time." And she would sing all this stuff. And that's the way they go after you. They go after you in denying money, denying support, trying to make you look like you were in the arms of Cesar Chavez and all of that kind of thing.

DOUGLASS: So I suppose you got to the point where you didn't even think about the support of the Farm Bureau?

STIERN: You just did what you felt you had to do that

was best and take your chances.

DOUGLASS: Okay. Well, Hugh Burns appointed you, right, chair? He was speaker pro tem.

STIERN: At that time, was he pro tem in 1966?[1]

DOUGLASS: It was in '67 when you were appointed.

STIERN: Well, he doesn't appoint you. The appointing of the chairmanship is done by the Rules Committee. So it's the pro tem and the members of the Rules Committee that appoints you. That's right.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But what I was trying to find out is do you have a specific story on that appointment?

STIERN: No.

DOUGLASS: Did he push you? Or did you want it?

STIERN: Well, I hadn't done anything like this. And I hadn't worked in that field. So I guess I kind of welcomed it. I wanted to learn more about it and know more about it. And so I took it willingly.

Finance Committee

DOUGLASS: At the same time, you were also appointed to the Finance Committee, which is another important committee.

STIERN: Well, they tie together, in a way.

DOUGLASS: Is it usual for people to be on both?

STIERN: Yes. It's not uncommon.

DOUGLASS: It sounds like a lot of work, to be on both.

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1. Burns served as pro tem until April of 1969.

STIERN: It is. It's a hard-work committee.

DOUGLASS: Could you describe the responsibilities of the Finance Committee in contrast to Revenue and Taxation? I think we know what Rev and Tax is, but what is Finance? What was the principal effort you made in the Finance Committee?

STIERN: Well, one thing is basic in state legislation, and you always have to remember it, is that you must absolutely have a balanced budget. This is one of the differences between congress and the state government. Congress doesn't have to balance the budget, and they don't. They ride way over it. Each state does have to balance its budget. You can't work with an unbalanced budget. And so the Finance Committee has to tool the cloth to fit the suit, and Revenue and Tax has to help find the money if it is not there. Close up loopholes. I think that is the term I used. I used to say to people that I chaired a committee on deductions and loopholes and exemptions, [Laughter] not revenue and taxation. This doesn't make chamber of commerce people happy to hear things like that. But that's in fact what happens. So there is a coordination that you have to work between those two.

And, of course, I was working heavy in school finance, and I had to recognize revenue

and taxation formulas and things. And when we got into things like Serrano-Priest[1] and a lot of that kind of thing, you had to know what you were doing. Because I was living on a powder keg all the time. You see, the financially favored schools that would always be cited would be Beverly Hills and McKittrick. Who knows where McKittrick is? Nobody knows where McKittrick is. But McKittrick in Kern County had, you know, McKittrick School District had $1.5 million assessed valuation behind every pupil in the school. In comparison, the city of Bakersfield had only $568 assessed valuation behind each member in the school. So that you had these fabulous districts that have oil in the ground, nothing but jack rabbits and sagebrush on top of the ground, who build lavish schools with all kinds of things. And you would have schools like out on the desert at Ridgecrest and China Lake where the PL, Public Law Funds 874, those funds where the impact of federal installations have to help out or you wouldn't have any schools at all.

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1. Serrano v. Priest, Sup., 96 Cal. Rptr. 601, California Supreme Court decision, August 30, 1971, declared California system of financing education unconstitutional and ordered the state legislature to devise a system eliminating disparities among school districts due to differences in property valuations.

And so here I am, chairing the committee, with all these in my backyard. Corporate farms, wealthy school districts, and all these kind of things. And it was something to live through. But I wasn't afraid of it, and I am not afraid of work.

DOUGLASS: Well, again, the Rules Committee, the pro tem, chose you. Now, I guess what I am getting at, though, is why did this start happening now? Was it because you had just been reelected? Was it because there was a change in the senate?

STIERN: Oh, I was becoming a senior member of the senate by that time. The top key committees were usually given to them.

Governmental Efficiency Committee

DOUGLASS: Working your way through. It was sort of logical at the time. Okay. The other committee that you were appointed to, which I would like to talk about a little bit, is the Governmental Efficiency Committee, which you were on 1967 to 1969. And I am interested in that because it seems to have the reputation of being the committee where bills could easily be killed. It was sort of a tool on the part of the senate. Could you comment on that?

STIERN: It was the graveyard of the senate. That's what it was called.

DOUGLASS: First of all, did you want to be on it?

STIERN: In the first place, nobody would want me on it, and I knew that when I first went up there. [Laughter] And as time went along. . . .

DOUGLASS: Now why wouldn't anybody want you on it?

STIERN: Because they could sense that I wasn't one of the "good old boys," and they could sense some of the things that I believed in. They could sense I was straight, and it was controlled by elements that were distasteful to me. Gambling, alcoholic production, many of the things that I didn't believe in, or that I felt were not good for California governance, citizens, and schools, and so forth went through that committee. That committee met the night before the committee meeting, at a dinner, and decided what was going to pass and what wasn't going to pass. And it didn't make any difference what was said in front of the committee. You knew where the bills were going to go by the tone of the committee. The thirteen hard-nosed people in the senate who could run something that way were on that committee.

Well, I wasn't asked to be on that committee for a long time. And when the senator who was the chair was on it for a long time, I wasn't chosen to be put on it. I didn't get on it until one of the ten of my group that came

in, when Senator [Eugene] Gene McAteer from San Francisco was made chairman, was when I came on the committee.

DOUGLASS: Well, now Dolwig had been?

STIERN: No. Dolwig was not. It was Gibson. Luther [E.] Gibson was the chairman.

DOUGLASS: Gibson. All right. And then McAteer became chairman?

STIERN: McAteer had been one of the vice chairs. And then there were a lot of the oldtimers on there that had been there for years before I got there. It was a solid block, like the old club still existing. Although things were changing in that one committee, big money things were handled in the way that they wanted to handle them, regardless. And it was called the graveyard of the senate. When you got to committee, well, you knew what bills were going to come out or weren't going to come out. When I got in there, I was on the short end of the stick on that thing because I was not in the group that could prevail.

[End Tape 6, Side B]

[Begin Tape 7, Side A]

STIERN: The seniority system was still in effect at that time. And I thought, "Well, I would like to see what they do here at nighttime, the night

before, and how the thing is handled." I had heard all these weird stories. And so I was on it. But, you know, there are just certain lobbyists that never, ever, ever, ever came to my office. Most lobbyist on alcoholic beverages, most lobbyists on horseracing; and some lobbyists of these type didn't pay much attention to Walt Stiern. They didn't have to. They could get their committee votes without me, and they would do it. I know that. Because I did have more seniority, that had to be handled, dealt with, too.

DOUGLASS: All right. Well, I am noting, yes, that McAteer was chairman. Burns was vice chairman. Is that unusual for the pro tem to be . . .

STIERN: No. The pro tem can't be a chairman. They can be a vice chairman.

DOUGLASS: And so that's such a key committee that he would do that.

STIERN: You see, if McAteer wasn't there, he was going to keep it going just like it was.

DOUGLASS: He could run it. Okay. The names here are Collier, Dolwig, [Joseph M.] Kennick, Lagomarsino, [John F.] McCarthy, Schrade, Short, Stiern, and Teale. These were the old boys, but you said there were. . . . Could you divide that group?

STIERN: Sure. You can divide that group real easy.

[Laughter] The lock, the lockup. I'll tell you who they are. You name them again, one at a time.

DOUGLASS: Collier.

STIERN: Oh, very much so. Absolute.

DOUGLASS: Dolwig.

STIERN: Absolute. He is in prison today. It's just the nature of the man. He is in the federal penitentiary at San Pedro.

DOUGLASS: What for?

STIERN: He aligned himself with a lot of these operations selling bonds in the Bahamas and in the United States, and all that.

DOUGLASS: Was this after he went out of office?

STIERN: No.

DOUGLASS: While he was in the senate?

STIERN: Yes. No, wait a minute. It was after. I am telling you the kind of man he. . . . The tendency he had at that time. Who is the next one?

DOUGLASS: Kennick.

STIERN: Kennick went along with it.

DOUGLASS: Lagomarsino.

STIERN: Lagomarsino, yes and no. They couldn't always depend on him on it.

DOUGLASS: When you say, "Went along with it," do you mean that they would respond to the lobbyists?

STIERN: They wouldn't oppose the position.

DOUGLASS: Of Burns?

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: Or the Rules Committee?

STIERN: Of the tone of that committee to graveyard bills.

DOUGLASS: And, generally, was the idea that anything that went there that was controversial, they would turn it down?

STIERN: If it were controversial or too expensive. Or if big, special interests were against it, they were protective of those big, special interests. And I could almost get so I could read a bill and tell you whether it was going to come out or not, just by the way it was written. And the people on there. Lagomarsino is today in congress.

DOUGLASS: So this is the old boy, go-along, get-along.

STIERN: That's right. Yes.

DOUGLASS: So Lagomarsino was a little more mixed?

STIERN: A little more mixed.

DOUGLASS: McCarthy.

STIERN: John McCarthy was one of the worst. He is deceased today. He was from Marin County and came out of a family that was in construction work over there. And he was always concerned about construction and construction companies and that type of thing. So you had a core there that had the control. You know, they had the

control. They had the majority of the committee.

DOUGLASS: And just to be on the committee, you had to have been there a while. So you have a certain number of years.

STIERN: Oh, yes. They wouldn't put you on there without knowing pretty much what you were going to do.

DOUGLASS: Jack Schrade.

STIERN: Schrade would go along with this. And he later became a pro tem.

DOUGLASS: Right. I am going to get into that. Short.

STIERN: Short was from Stockton, and he rode along with it. I think some of it troubled him. Short's field. . . . The biggest thing that came out was the Short-Doyle Act in mental health. And he was concerned with welfare and mentally ill people and all these kinds of things. And he had trouble because he couldn't see protecting people against the cost of people who were in mental hospitals and all. These people that we were talking about were not the most generous people with things like people in mental hospitals and that type of thing.

DOUGLASS: So that bothered him?

STIERN: Short was bothered by this. Also, Short, he was kind of independent. Sometimes he would vote with them. Sometimes he didn't.

DOUGLASS: Stephen P. Teale.

STIERN: And Teale is a physician. And in the early days, Teale was very much this way. He went along with the group that he knew he had to work with to get things done. He more mellowed in the later years of his time in the legislature, in my opinion, and was more. . . . Well, he was from Calaveras County, we called them the mountain men, and they were rugged independents, always watching to see that the large communities--Los Angeles and the south--didn't take advantage of the north. And he is in the north. And water. If you look at that group, you see the lockup of the water in the north. There are too many northerners on there for Los Angeles' well-being. And there are those kind of mysterious alliances. Maybe that was one of the reasons that I was put on there, because of the needs of water in the San Joaquin Valley and the agriculture of the Central Valley. They would be safe on the things like that, and yet you had enough corporate farms and agriculture here that I wasn't going to rock the boat too much. They probably thought that when they put me on.

DOUGLASS: I see. They thought that would control you.

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: What about McAteer, the chairman?

STIERN: McAteer was in the same sack with Burns and Collier.

DOUGLASS: So that really only left you and Lagomarsino, a little bit of the time, and maybe Short some of the time.

STIERN: That's right. And some of these people are very wealthy people. That committee was made up of very, very wealthy people. The chair was a multi-millionaire. The vice chair was a millionaire. There were other people on the committee that were millionaires. They were people who were representing wealthy families and wealthy firms and that type of thing. It's like the finger of the chamber of commerce being in the lawmaking process. [Laughter] I always felt that way.

DOUGLASS: Do you have a specific example or two you could give of how something was killed? While you were on the committee, can you think of a bill having this done to it and your observing the whole process? Something that you remember in particular that exemplifies what went on.

STIERN: You see, the pro tem, as chair of the Rules Committee, technically the Rules Committee, but it is the pro tem that has a very strong hand in it, assigns a bill to the committee in which it is going to be heard. And sometimes that's the

life and death of the bill, right there.

DOUGLASS: So if you sent it to Governmental Efficiency, you knew it got short shrift right there. [Laughter]

STIERN: Oh, yes. I remember a bill that was before us, which was a bill that had to do with optometry. And the optometrists, as a whole, didn't want the bill. And they had asked Hugh Burns to kind of see if he would kill the bill. He was embarrassed because he couldn't get the bill killed. And I remember walking down the hall of the capitol one time when a group of us were going to lunch at a thing, a group of ten or fifteen senators were invited to lunch, and I remember Burns' exact words. He said, "Walter, I don't know what I am going to do with that blankety-blank-blank bill. I sent it to the Public Health and Safety Committee. They passed it out. I rereferred it to the Committee on Business and Professions. They passed it out." And he says, "I don't know how I am going to do (kill) it unless I send it to Fish and Game."

You know, it had nothing to do with Fish and Game, but he thought maybe it takes to that degree in order to kill a bill. So the bills got jazzed around that way, hoping to kill them. They would find the right combination where they would get a majority of the committee to kill

it. And not necessarily because of germaneness.

And you can do it with a lot of bills. A school bus bill would be an example. Where do you send it? To the Transportation Committee or to the Education Committee? And the pro tem has a choice of doing that. Well, he looks at the bill, decides what he likes, figures what's best for the bill from his viewpoint, and he can send it to that committee and damage it or help it, depending on how tolerant he might be.

DOUGLASS: And as you pointed out, it can then be rereferred to another committee.

STIERN: It can be referred. Maybe the pro tem doesn't like the way it came out. Before it goes to the Finance Committee, he'll send it to another policy committee.

DOUGLASS: Well, again, I think you started to talk about. . . . Can you think of a bill that came to Governmental Efficiency that simply got this standard treatment? Anything that comes to mind particularly.

STIERN: A bill that was refuted there?

DOUGLASS: Yes. That got the "deep-six treatment." Or maybe one that beat the rap, in a sense.

STIERN: Once in awhile one would come out, and somebody would say, "How the hell did that every get out of GE?" It was so obvious.

DOUGLASS: Well, I guess, let's get at it in another way. How much discussion was there in that committee?

STIERN: Not very much. They knew what they were going to do. You could come up, and they would listen to you as a witness. They just didn't probe you and drag the thing out or anything.

DOUGLASS: So if you were in the shoes of someone coming, it was your bill and you were trying to present it to this committee, they might listen and they wouldn't probe much, and they already. . . . You felt it was almost a predetermined vote.

STIERN: Yes. I knew whether my bill was going out or not. And pretty soon somebody would make a motion. And then there was this voice vote, and you couldn't tell whether it was seven or six, or six or seven. And the chair would announce that the bill was dead and so would the committee.

DOUGLASS: Did you make any particular attempt to extend the discussion so there was more probing and more getting information on the table?

STIERN: That wasn't going to happen.

DOUGLASS: The chair could control it?

STIERN: The chair would just look at you. And McAteer's eyes are saying, "Walt, what are you trying to do here? You know we are not going to. . . ." It's a closed shop.

DOUGLASS: Sort of a frustrating experience.

STIERN: And, of course, when you got. . . . Another thing to champion is Peter [H.] Behr with the voice-vote bill. That made everyone of them vote and be counted. And the public knew where they stood. And the people whose representative was sitting there knew their person's position. There was no question about it.

DOUGLASS: Well, you went off of that pretty quickly. You were on '67 to '69.

STIERN: I didn't really enjoy that committee.

DOUGLASS: Were you glad to go off?

STIERN: Sure.

DOUGLASS: Were you asked to go off? Or did you volunteer?

STIERN: No. I just didn't ask to be placed on it again. I felt I could do better things with my time.

DOUGLASS: Now, at this point, when you took on these new committees, you left Public Health and Safety, which you had been chairing. Was that part of the give and take of the assignments?

STIERN: Well, yes. And that committee was folded up, and part of it went to Health and Welfare and part of it went to Business and Professions. And they discontinued that committee. It was an economy move.

XV. SENATE PRESIDENTS PRO TEM AND OTHER SENATORS

DOUGLASS: Okay. I would like to spend some time now talking about the whole business of the

president pro tem position in the senate. Burns was the pro tem in '67 and '68. And apparently there were two attempts to unseat him. One led by Grunsky, and one by [Howard] Way. What do you recall of that encounter?

Howard Way (1969-70)

STIERN: Well, Howard Way and Grunsky were both Republicans. And Howard Way was really stronger at trying to unseat him than anybody else. And he was successful in doing it.

DOUGLASS: Not the first time, though, apparently.

STIERN: That an attempt was made to do that?

DOUGLASS: Yes. He finally succeeded in May of '69. I guess it was a 20-20 tie at that point, as far as party went. And the Republicans were trying to make those first efforts to get that position. But, anyway, in May of '69, Way did succeed. And who did you vote for in that election?

STIERN: I shocked Howard Way out of his shoes because I voted for Hugh Burns. The thing was put on a. . . . It was another one of those things where both men are living. Hugh Burns is mentally a vegetable today. He just sits in a chair looking at space. Howard Way is very active and works in the Sacramento scene and is involved in a lot of things. He originally came from Tulare County.

He was kind of taking a moralist position on how Hugh Burns operated. To me, there is a difference between the pro tem of the senate and what a person's morals might be. You had things like Howard Way was a very active churchgoer. Hughs Burns, I don't think had been in a church that he could remember. Howard Way is athletically inclined. He doesn't use alcoholic beverages. Hugh Burns had always used alcoholic beverages all his life. The position got to be kind of like a moralist type thing. Not necessarily your ability at being pro tem. And, of course, you never make a move like this in the senate unless you know where your ducks are because you can put yourself in a very strange position.

I can remember Howard Way asking me up to his office and asking for my support. Because Tulare and Kern tend to vote Republican, he expected I would support [him]. "Our likenesses are so great, I am sure you are going to support me. And I am sure you are going to support a person like me. Certainly not a scoundrel like Hugh Burns," was the way it was couched. I said, "No. I am going to support Hugh Burns." Way was standing, and he backed up three steps and fell on the davenport and said, "I can't

believe you, that you would support. . . ." And I said, "Well, I am sorry, Howard, but as far as doing the duties of a pro tem, I think he is better at it than you are. And you can't relegate people on the basis of their personal habits or where they are from or what they believe in, or who they are. You have to look at the senate as a senate." And I said, "Hugh Burns has always been fair. He's listened to me. He listens to other people. He wants to keep this down to a low-cost operation. He's got this experience. I don't see that he is that bad. And I don't see the reason for the change." Of course, when you do that, forever more, you have got a string that is never going to be retied. And I don't think Howard Way has ever felt the same towards me since.

DOUGLASS: So there was a closed caucus vote, and you participated in that vote.

STIERN: Yes. And I supported Hugh Burns.

DOUGLASS: And how close was the vote?

STIERN: Well, Howard wrestled that away from Hugh Burns and was the pro tem for a very short period of time.

DOUGLASS: No. But I meant, do you know? Was it a real tight vote in that closed caucus?

STIERN: Yes, it was. It was very close. And what troubled me was that once Howard Way became the

pro tem, he did exactly what I told him was the difference between him and Hugh Burns. You would have to have appointments to talk to [President] pro tem Way. When you were in, they closed the door, and it was a closed-door session. There was no open-door policy between the pro tem and the senate, regardless of whether you were a Democrat or Republican. He would talk with some people. He wouldn't talk with other people. And I went back to tell him. I said, "This is exactly what I was talking about, Howard. When Hugh Burns was in this office, that door was always open. And any member could go in and talk to him. That's not true in your case." And he is a very religious man, and he would have little religious classes in the church across the street before the legislative day, in which certain senators who were more religious than others would come to these kind of things. Theses little cliques developed.

Jack Schrade (1970)

And so that's when Schrade ran. And Schrade, of all people. Schrade was considered the biggest practical joker in the legislature.

DOUGLASS: Oh, was he?

STIERN: Very well-to-do. Everything was funny with him.

He'd screw your microphone loose so it didn't work and laugh like crazy when you couldn't talk. And Howard Way just saw him as a non-productive guy who never grew, you know, and who was not serious about anything. And that turned over from Schrade to Mills, and then over from Mills to Roberti. Whereas Burns had that position a long time. He was pro tem for some time before I got there.

DOUGLASS: Yes. You thought he treated you pretty fairly all along?

STIERN: I thought he did. I thought he was level-headed. I thought he was prepared. And as a new man, he treated me just the same as he did his older men.

DOUGLASS: Well, there is the '67 to '71 period I am talking about that goes from Burns to Mills. Was this then a change in the nature of that office, and it went to a partisan . . .

STIERN: It became partisan.

DOUGLASS: Yes. And less consensus-building?

STIERN: Lost the club feeling. Lost the "we are all here together."

DOUGLASS: Was it due, really, do you think, to a change in attitude among the senate?

STIERN: It was personality, largely.

DOUGLASS: But there were people in who were, in a way, balking against Burns' style?

STIERN: Yes. The newer ones coming in because they saw him as old. You know, he was up in years. If you came into the senate and you were thirty-five years old, a man that was sixty-six looked like a pretty old man to you.

DOUGLASS: So Howard Way was short-lived in that position. And you didn't feel he did well then?

STIERN: Very short. I didn't think he did well. I don't think he was able to work together with the different elements of the senate or even with the speaker in the assembly, working together as the legislature.

DOUGLASS: Now the vote came in February 10th of 1970 for Schrade. How did that happen? How did it become an issue? In other words, Way had only been in since May 13 of 1969, less than a year.

STIERN: Well, you know, all Republicans don't think alike. They were fractured into two groups, and the Democrats were fractured into two groups that way. I felt that Kern County's interest would be similar to Fresno's, in the San Joaquin Valley, and I could always get his ear and explain problems that I had and he would listen to them.

DOUGLASS: Schrade was a rancher, wasn't he?

STIERN: Schrade was a man who was at one time a bouncer for a bar. That's a true fact. And then he

worked for a volunteer fire department in San Diego County. And he invested money into avocado orchards in La Mesa. And when La Mesa bloomed, he had several hundreds of acres of avocados, and made a lot of money. And then he invested in various, different things, and seemed to know how to manage money pretty well.

DOUGLASS: Did both parties then caucus at that time? How did the issue come up? The Republicans were not happy with him? Enough Democrats weren't? So were there closed caucuses on this?

STIERN: Yes. There were disgruntled people in both parties about Burns.

DOUGLASS: No. About Way.

STIERN: In Howard Way's case, there were. . . . You know, he is a likeable man. I like Howard Way, as an individual. But he is, I thought, very, very conservative, and very, very straight-laced about some things that carried over into that office that probably . . .

DOUGLASS: Well, others must have felt the same way. What I am saying is how did it come to a head so quickly? There was a consensus.

STIERN: It wasn't quickly. It had been brewing for a while.

DOUGLASS: Well, he was only there less than a year.

STIERN: Well, I know, but he probably was working on it before he got it a year and a half or two years,

trying to wrestle it away and digging around and talking and getting commitments and promises.

DOUGLASS: Are you talking about Schrade now?

STIERN: Well, when you move to become a pro tem, you had better have your twenty-one votes, or you are in big trouble.

DOUGLASS: So Way had been working on it.

STIERN: So he had been working on it a long time.

DOUGLASS: But then he didn't last long. And so what I am really trying to find out is why Schrade?

STIERN: Schrade was a. . . .

DOUGLASS: Why was he elected as the one?

STIERN: Well, he was a Burns-type person, and very, very committed to Burns. He has a strange, dying dedication commitment to the senate that was interesting. The seal of the state senate was the result of Schrade. You know, there is a seal of the state senate. And he used his own money and went out and got students at Davis and Sacramento State College in a contest to design a seal for the senate. About thirty-five students got into this thing. He awarded substantial prizes for this, like $500 for the winning prize, $300 for second, $200 for third, and chose the prize that won it. All the designs were put on display in the senate lounge. The senators all looked at these things

and decided which one we thought was the best. He ramroded the whole thing. In fact, we even have a symbol today that came from Schrade. He had love for the senate and the people in it. That club feeling. And it just rebounced back to a person like Burns, who happened to be Schrade at that time.

DOUGLASS: So people liked him and would rally around him?

STIERN: In accord with kind of the way that Burns had operated.

DOUGLASS: In other words, you now had sort of the Young Turks reacting with Way, and then you had it bouncing back off to the Burns' type?

STIERN: Exactly.

DOUGLASS: Now you voted for Schrade. And I take it that was because you weren't happy with Way?

STIERN: Well, I still didn't think Way was the person for the job. I never have thought so.

DOUGLASS: Okay. The point has been made that you were one of only two senators who, through all of this business, retained the same committee chairmanships, you and Rodda. How did the chairmanship question come up through all of this? Did it become a question? Were there threats? Like Way, did he retaliate by trying to remove you as a chair?

STIERN: No, no.

DOUGLASS: And Schrade supported you?

STIERN: He supported me too.

James Mills (1971-1980)

DOUGLASS: And then, in '71, Mills was elected. How did he happen to take over from Schrade?

STIERN: They were both from San Diego County. It's interesting.

DOUGLASS: Yes, it is. Now the Democrats, in '70 . . .

STIERN: Had more power.

DOUGLASS: Had a 21-19 lead, at the end of the '70 November election.

STIERN: You see, Burns was really chosen as a coalition pro tem. And, actually, Mills was a coalition pro tem too. He had some Republican support and some Democrat support.

DOUGLASS: Why did they unseat Schrade then?

STIERN: Why did they unseat them? Let's see.

DOUGLASS: Of course, he was a Republican, and now the Democrats had the majority. But it was still tight, 21-19.

STIERN: Mills put together a coalition of members wanting a change in the way the senate housekeeping was operated.

DOUGLASS: So when it opened up, was it apparent to you that Mills was the next person? Had he been working on it?

STIERN: Yes. Mills, working as a coalition, working both sides of the aisle trying to getting it

that way, and he did.

DOUGLASS: Do you think he saw that coming? Had he already been working on it?

STIERN: He didn't like Schrade.

DOUGLASS: Different types?

STIERN: Yes. Very different.

DOUGLASS: Mills was a history teacher, or something?

STIERN: Mills was a teacher, he was a librarian, he was a museum curator. He was trained in that field. A very serious, droll, English-type of person. And Schrade was a playboy that loved to have a good time. Practical joker. And [Bob] Wilson was the name of the man.

DOUGLASS: Who finally unseated Schrade?

STIERN: Senator Wilson came up. He beat Schrade, and he became the senator from San Diego County. And then when Roberti became ambitious to become pro tem, he caught Mills when Mills had gone east for something in Washington, D. C. And formed a coup and garnered enough votes to get in. When Mills came back, he was out.

DOUGLASS: That was ten years later, though. He lasted quite a while.

STIERN: He did. When Mills went out, he went out very angry. My understanding is that Mills has never been back in the senate chamber since he left the senate. That's kind of interesting. He was really hurt. He saw it as a terrible rejection.

DOUGLASS: And so Roberti was waiting for his opportunity?

STIERN: Yes. And he put it together.

DOUGLASS: And was there unhappiness with Mills then?

STIERN: Oh, yes. Sure.

DOUGLASS: When Roberti pulled this off.

STIERN: Oh, yes, those two men are. . . .

DOUGLASS: No, but I mean within the senate. For instance, how did you feel about the way Mills was serving?

STIERN: I supported Mills. I couldn't see that he was doing that poor a job. I thought he was doing a pretty good job. The executive secretary of the Rules Committee was John C. Williamson. I knew him real well and felt that John had done a lot to help the pro tem in what he was doing. But with or without Stiern, Roberti became pro tem. But Mills and Roberti are kind of like mortal enemies to this day.

DOUGLASS: Mills feeling he was stabbed in the back, I suppose, opportunistically?

STIERN: Oh, he felt he was. He was rejected while he was out of town.

DOUGLASS: You then supported Mills' election when he was first elected.

STIERN: Yes. He did need to get a crossover. The senate was too tight in those days that anybody, to be elected, had to have some bipartisan

support.

STIERN: Usually there was a person who would cross over.

DOUGLASS: And, apparently, Teale and Collier threw their support to Mills at the last minute. And then, as a reward possibly, I guess Collier was made chairman of the new Finance Committee. Does that track to you?

Randolph Collier

STIERN: Yes. Well, Collier was chairman of the Finance Committee for several years. I think more than that. They were like the remnants of the old holdover of what was there when I arrived, you know, by that time. And Teale was not too well and slowed down a lot. He had some health problems. And Collier divorced and married, he divorced and remarried at a later age, and wanted to spend more time with his family. He had children by his second wife, although he was up in his late sixties at the time that he had these children. And he just didn't want to carry as heavy a load as he had. I don't know the intrigues in that very well. You never know what passes between somebody who is ambitious to be pro tem and what he may promise or not promise somebody that would give his support. You never are privy to that.

DOUGLASS: Well, you were, before we started today, making a few interesting comments about Collier and

coming from Siskiyou County. Maybe we could talk about him a little bit because you said he had an influence that was disproportionate to the density of the population he represented. And he was young, you said.

STIERN: Yes. When he came down, he was young. When he was a young man, in his twenties, he was what was called a. . . . There was a justice of peace court. You know, we once had justices of the peace in California, and those people who were sitting as judges were not even trained in law. And he was elected up in Siskiyou County and held that kind of a position. So he was known as Judge Collier. He was not a lawyer at all. In fact, he came out of the savings and loan business. He was in that field. Or I guess the title business. He came out of the title business and was elected on the basis that they had already got the short end on roads in northern California. And so he got elected and came to Sacramento, and he mixed well with the "club and the boys." And he had certain characteristics that made him a strong individual.

He got himself on the chairmanship of the Transportation Committee. And, of course, when you say that, you know what you are talking

about. You are talking about navigation, airlines, automobiles, trucking, anything you can think of that relates transportation. Harbors, highways. It's a powerful committee in California because California is so mobile with automobiles and trucks and things. And so he came to Sacramento and he got on that committee, and this was where the no voice vote thing was very important. And he pushed it for all it was worth.

And, oddly, as it turned out, the great development in southern California with freeways and transportation are a result of this man's effort. They drew this imaginary line across the middle of California. There was something on the ballot called the Breed-Mayo formula line, and the money from gasoline was divided that way. It is still that way.

DOUGLASS: Fifty-fifty on that line?

STIERN: No, 60 [percent] to the south and 40 [percent] to the north. And he was a demon at not taking any money out of the highway funds for any other purposes except transportation. "If you do, you'll rue the day. Don't keep tapping the transportation fund. Don't keep tapping the tax on gasoline for other things than transporation, or you'll rue the day." And I have heard that speech so many times from him. And it came to

pass that people wanted to. "Well, we'll go and tap this fund for that, and take some money out of this for that." So when you look at that. . . . And, you know, people call him "the father of the Freeways" in California. He was a very, very spectacular man with snow-white hair that was curly and fluffed. Outspoken. Really a character. But he went along with Hugh Burns, although he was a Republican, when Hugh Burns first became pro tem. And that already put him in a favorite seat all during the Burns' regime. And he carried on with that for awhile.

DOUGLASS: So one person can have . . .

STIERN: Oh, the power that he had was something.

DOUGLASS: And always could return, probably, because he had a safe district.

STIERN: That's right. He could always. . . . It was sparsely populated. Everybody knew Randy Collier. They all knew about the wonderful roads that he brought into their counties. You know, you take all those little counties in the north, like Modoc and Lassen and Humboldt and Siskiyou, and all those little, slightly populated places, they have all a like mind.

DOUGLASS: So then, by seniority, those people become very powerful.

STIERN: Very, very powerful.

Peter Behr Addresses "Vice of the Voice Vote"

DOUGLASS: Well, maybe this is a good time to talk about the Behr bill, which was in '72. Senator Behr introduced a resolution, I guess, SR4, which addressed "the vice of the voice vote." What do you know about that bill?

STIERN: Well, he did this, and it was very difficult. There were people. . . . There was the ragtag remnants of the club that I went into in '59, and the power of the GE [Governmental Efficiency] Committee carrying out what they wanted and what they didn't want and how it operated. And then there were changes that came after reapportionment. And Peter Behr came in from Marin County, and he came in to take the place of a man whose name was [John F.] McCarthy, that you see on there once in awhile, from Marin County. And McCarthy was the old club and the old boy operation, and Peter Behr was not. And he just said, "Right is right, and wrong is wrong. The public is being denied knowing where their votes are going, how they are going. And they have a right to know the recorded vote so that you vote for or against somebody the next time around if he doesn't vote what you want."

DOUGLASS: We should probably clarify here, for the tape, that the voice vote was such that the chairman

simply declared the result of the vote.

STIERN: And it was never debated.

DOUGLASS: And I think you were telling me about one time when there was one person there.

STIERN: There was one person there and one person only.

DOUGLASS: Who was the chair of that committee?

STIERN: Randolph Collier. A person went to his office, and he said, "I don't understand this. I saw who was sitting there. And there wasn't a quorum. The vote was taken, and my bill was defeated." This was a new, young assemblyman. "And I don't understand this." He said, "There was only one dissenting vote." And Senator Collier said, "I know. It was mine. That's why the bill died." And the guy walked out of the office. What could he say? That's pretty roughshod.

DOUGLASS: So when Behr introduced this bill, I take it people like Collier certainly opposed it.

STIERN: People who liked Collier opposed it. People who liked Behr supported it.

DOUGLASS: No. I mean people who were like Collier.

STIERN: There were some people that stayed with him. Not many. By this time you had younger people coming in. There was a lot of changeover. Reapportionment had taken place. And the iron was hot, and Peter struck and got it.

DOUGLASS: Yes. It apparently went out of the senate on a

34-3 vote, which is rather amazing.

STIERN: It is.

DOUGLASS: Then it was considered in the assembly. And finally a joint conference committee passed the bill. Do you remember any of the machinations of that? Or were you involved?

STIERN: I wasn't involved with the conference committee on it. I just knew that I realized that it was a benchmark in the history of the California legislature. And, like I told you, I don't think we should forget this. Because if Peter Behr never did anything else except that, he would have done a service to California that far outweighs people who went up there in the legislature for eight or ten years, doing what they did. This was so important.

DOUGLASS: Now this meant that when a committee took a vote, it was a roll call and it was recorded how you individually voted.

STIERN: Exactly. And you couldn't meet unless they had a quorum, and the people sitting there had to be voted and recorded.

DOUGLASS: And you had to be there to have a vote recorded.

STIERN: Exactly. And if you abstained, you just said you abstained. But anybody had a right to know that either a representative abstained and that that person did abstain.

DOUGLASS: And what effect did this have on the behavior of committee members?

STIERN: Oh, it changed the whole show. It changed it tremendously. People were a lot more careful about how they voted because of whatever reflection that had on the district they came out of. And this concept of a courtesy vote for somebody in another part of the state, that started drying up real fast.

XVI. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND GOVERNOR REAGAN

DOUGLASS: Okay. One other thing in '67 you touched on a little bit, but not really. Clark Kerr was fired in '67, and Reagan had proposed a 10 percent cut in the UC budget. Do you recall any of that and the lobbying that went on and the firing of Kerr?

STIERN: Well, he is either fired or not fired by the regents.

DOUGLASS: But I think Reagan was out, sort of, to get him, wasn't he?

STIERN: Well, yes, he was angry with the University of California. My feelings of Clark Kerr were that he did a very fine job as president. I think of all the help and things that he had done during the Master Plan days in aid and assistance, and that kind of thing. Of course, the constitutional barrier of the [Board of] Regents

against legislative intervention kept him in there until such time as he was replaced by the regents. But it takes a majority of the regents to fire him, and the regents are made up two kinds of people. They are made up of appointees by governors, and they are made up by ex officio members who, by the position they hold, find themselves on the Board of Regents. Like the superintendent of public instruction and like the speaker of the house and like the pro tem of the senate and some of these different positions. But Reagan's approach to this. . . .

[End of Tape 7, Side A]

[Begin Tape 7, Side B]

STIERN: I don't think that. . . . Reagan was always out of step with the University of California. I don't think he ever grasped the prestigiousness of that university, how great it was, or how complicated it was. You can't have a nine-campus university with all the attachments to that, like Bodega Bay Maritime Studies, the U.S. atomic stations in New Mexico, and the Scripps Institute connections, and Hastings Law School, separate and apart, and all these tremendous properties that they own without having complications. I've heard the figure that the University of California owns property in some forty states in the union and who those

have been given by and how they are to be used and for what purpose and all that. But it was just awfully hard, too much, for him to grasp, in a way. And, of course, he gave no credence at at all to the "inmates," as he would say, at Berkeley, trying to tell the institution how it was going to run itself. And so he had just constant total trouble there.

And there was a time when people started saying, "Well, maybe we should listen to faculty, and maybe we should listen to students. And maybe they should be on representative boards." I couldn't understand all the problems that people would want to lay in Clark Kerr's lap. And I thought he did a good job myself.

XVII. STATE MEDICAL PRACTICES ACT

DOUGLASS: Then one other thing in '67 (I think we have partly talked about this, if it is the same incident), the state Medical Practices Act, there was a resolution in the senate, S.R. 29, to study the effectiveness of the '65 revision for strengthening discipline. Wasn't that the bill [S.B. 403] you talked about in the last interview?

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: And all your troubles with the medical profession. Now that was the original '65

revision, where you had the difficulty?

STIERN: Well, you know, it took me several years to get this bill. In other words, I had to put it in every session and improve upon it each time because I was trying to overcome what I thought was a grave, grave and a gross inequity to consumers of medical services, which was the fault, as far as I was concerned, of the medical profession. You know, doctors don't like to go to court and testify against other doctors doing things that they shouldn't be doing.

DOUGLASS: Well, then they wouldn't discipline within their profession.

STIERN: They wouldn't discipline their own people. And who better should do it than they?

DOUGLASS: And this was the meeting you described in Los Angeles.

STIERN: This is. That's where the nut was finally cracked. I had known of a case locally, and I knew of several in other parts of the state. And I had some case histories of some gross, gross errors made by physicians, at the expense of patients. Yet medicine would not go out and do anything about this. So my bill was built around. . . . I was trying to build a bill in which medically oriented people. . . . In other words, you would be judged by your peers if

charges were brought against you in court. If my wife had been abused obstetrically or if my family had been abused orthopedically or radiologically or whatever, how would I know, how would the consumer of medicine know? They wouldn't know. And the local medical society chapter in their county would not go after that person. And so I took a very strong stand, saying that people who know medicine and surgery should be the ones who are the colleagues who should be riding herd on those who are incompetent or improperly trained, or going past what their training was or have become drug-addicted or had done a lot of things that they should not have done.

Well, that was a new, new view, to do that. Nobody wanted to do that. And, especially, they were not sure they wanted a veterinarian carrying a bill like that, or one who happened to be a Democrat, because many, many physicians are Republican, and they were suspicious of it. And I said, "I have no axe to grind. I think that when you have this kind of thing, I think it should be carried through all the way. In dentistry, in veterinary medicine, into all these different forms. But one doctor, incompetent, practicing a lifetime can do a lot of damage to a lot of people."

Well, when that bill went in, red flags went up all over. What is this all about? What's he doing? What is he trying to do? So I found out I had to go and present myself to different county medical groups, which I did in San Diego and San Francisco and Stockton and Bakersfield. I had great hostility in Bakersfield on this because one of these cases was a local case, and they thought I was wanting to persecute this doctor because of this one local case. It wasn't that. It was that I had like ten case histories that I could show which were just terrible, just terrible, that had been done. And I wanted to do something about that.

And I would present these cases when I would meet with these different organizations. And I would say, "Who is more qualified and trained to know if a physician is out of line?" So what I did, I made regions in the state, set up zones. And then we set up people to be appointed by the governor to this Medical Disciplinary Act zone. And if somebody was accused by a lawyer or a representative of some family that they had been abused or mistreated, this would go before this board. And they would have to determine whether this person had or not. And they would make determination of whether he could continue practicing or whether

he would have to go back to school. Or whether he couldn't do such-and-such a surgery without another doctor being at his elbow. Or if he was unfortunate enough to be addicted to drugs, that he would have to go off of that, be clean before he got back into a surgery. And all these things.

Well, the strange thing was people listened, and they didn't say very much. Well, I got before the group in Los Angeles County, and I can't remember the man's name who was president at that time. I said, "You know, figures show that of all the doctors in California, or of all the doctors in Los Angeles County, about 1 percent to 2 percent is what we are talking about. But that can cause a lot of trouble. In Los Angeles County, with 14,500 doctors, 1 percent is 140 doctors practicing in Los Angeles County, past their knowledge or ability, beyond their skills, doing all kinds of horrible things. And they should be screened by these people." And this man was on the platform with me, and he is the one who stood up at the microphone--and the place was packed--I never will forget this. I didn't realize what that would look like, this auditorium packed with doctors who didn't even know each other. They

finally supported the bill. And they do have these boards, and they do set them up. And the governor does appoint them. Sometimes he is political about it. The Republican governors appoint Republican doctors, and Democrats [Laughter], both kinds. And it was picked up on.

I'll quickly cite you a case. I can go through this one real fast. A doctor in Santa Barbara treated a student at UC Santa Barbara where the woman had been bitten by an insect, an insect bite. She went to see a physician in Santa Barbara. He looked at her, and he prescribed chloramycetin capsules, for her to take a certain number of these capsules. And there were a certain number of milligrams per capsule. And this is a drug which, on the literature and on the material says, "You do not give this drug without making lab studies for the person to see what happens. Because, at a certain point, you can develop aplastic anemia. You dissolve the person's red blood cells, and they are gone. And that's the end of them. Do you remember the motion picture star named Chandler, or something like that, who died in Africa, had died of this.

So she ran through her tablets with this insect bite on her neck. And she calls back,

and he refills her prescription by telephone without looking at her. She goes back on a second round of this. No lab test taken at all. And she died. Well, it just happened that her father was the publisher of the Fullerton newspaper, and he was also on the board of the hospital in Fullerton. And he came at this doctor tooth and thong, suing, and won his suit in court. And it was a tremendous amount of money given on this, in recognition. The father was awarded something like $400,000. And he didn't want the money. He was a wealthy man, and he just gave it to the hospital that he was on the board of and they developed a children's wing in memory of his daughter. But, to have a thing like that happen.

And I know another case where a man was a polio victim, and he had a shortened limb. And so a man who wasn't even a surgeon said, "That's no problem. We will just reduce the femur of this leg to make it the length of this leg, and the man will have both legs the same size and will walk again." The only problem was when he did the surgery, he lost the blood supply, and he had to amputate his good leg. That type of thing. And there are case after case, or there are case after case of physician who use

nonqualified X-ray technicians to take X rays which should not be done because of the hazard of over radiation.

Well, to make a long story short, I finally got that bill. And it took a long time to get it. I can't remember whether it was three or four years. But then it was picked up and put on the books in other states, and it has helped a lot of people.

And then I also carried the bill that said that you could not use X ray or fluoroscope or any of the medical equipment of that type without being qualified to do that. Taking an examination to do that. Before, people could just be turned loose, just hiring a girl off the street to do it. Saying, "Set this here, set that dial here, and push the button." And so, to me, because I am interested in that in the whole field of medicine, (we are always short of medical people in the legislature), I think it is one of my more important bills.

XVII. LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

Robert H. Finch (1967-Jan., 1969)

DOUGLASS: All right. Why don't we, at this point, talk a little bit about some of the lieutenant governors who presided over the senate when they were there. First of all, Robert Finch was not

there very long. But what were your impressions of him?

STIERN: No. He wasn't there very long. He was hardly there long enough to give an impression, actually. But I didn't find any particular fault with him. He was an intelligent person. From everything I remember, he did a good job, but he was there not a very long period of time.

DOUGLASS: Well, then how did he compare with Glenn Anderson, who had been lieutenant governor before?

Glenn M. Anderson (1959-1966)

STIERN: Glenn Anderson would spend more time in the chair as president of the senate. The lieutenant governor of California is president of the senate and can preside as much as he wants to. He also has other obligations. He is on different boards, along with [other] people, the controller and other persons.

DOUGLASS: Right. The State Lands Commission.

STIERN: And, usually, those things take so much of their time, they don't preside very much. And, usually, we have a person in the senate who presides himself that would fall in sequence to the pro tem. Or anybody in the room could preside and vote for his own district at the same time he is presiding. Glenn Anderson, who is in congress today, chaired an awful lot.

DOUGLASS: He liked to do it?

STIERN: He liked to do it. He liked to chair, and he did it a lot. It was almost like if he didn't have anything else to do, he was up there chairing the senate. Most lieutenant governors seemingly don't like to chair. They have got enough demands on their time without that. And they don't like to do it and only go in to break a tie vote. And will come up and do that.

Ed Reinicke (Jan., 1969-Oct., 1974)

DOUGLASS: Well, what about Ed Reinicke?

STIERN: Ed Reinicke was there such a short time also that you could hardly make a judgment on the man. He had been in congress, as I recall, and he was brought back by Republican "powers that be" to run for that.

DOUGLASS: Well, he was appointed first by Reagan to replace Finch. Remember when Finch went to Nixon's cabinet, then he appointed Reinicke, in 1969.

STIERN: That's exactly right. Then Reinicke ran, did he?

DOUGLASS: Then he ran the next time.

STIERN: Then he was elected on his own in 1970.

DOUGLASS: That's right.

STIERN: And he was a popular man. His wife was very popular, and she mingled well, mixed with the

wives of legislators and was such a contrast to Nancy Reagan that she just went the other way. She would have things in her home and invite them all out. And it was just totally a breath of fresh breeze to feel that she was that concerned with them, the legislators and their problems and their wives, they got along very well with her. And then he got into a kind of a, what was it, some kind of a fault with San Diego with the convention?

DOUGLASS: It was perjury, in terms of the Republican National Convention.

STIERN: Yes. And he fell in bad graces with his own party.

DOUGLASS: And he had to resign.

STIERN: Yes. And then. . . .

John L. Harmer (Oct., 1974-end 1974) and Mervyn M. Dymally (1975-1978)

DOUGLASS: John Harmer was the temporary one.

STIERN: Very short time, John Harmer was there.

DOUGLASS: That was just to fill in. Then [Mervyn] Dymally came in with Brown.

STIERN: Yes. Dymally was the next.

DOUGLASS: Talk about that because you had known Dymally in the senate.

STIERN: Yes. I did know Dymally in the senate. Dymally is an interesting person. Dymally was born in Trinidad, and he was a former British subject

assemblyman, and then ran for the senate. Was elected to the senate. He ran for the lieutenant governorship and won that. And then was elected to congress and has served in congress ever since that time.

He, as much as anyone, other than John Harmer, a Republican, (Mervyn Dymally is a Democrat), sitting in the senate, are the ones that developed this fantastic politicizing of the senate, where caucus chairmen and caucus committee and caucuses of the party and all that developed.

DOUGLASS: The proliferation of staff and positions.

STIERN: That's right. From the time those two men were there on. They also were active in reapportionment when they were both there. You know, they were fighting to make territories more adaptable to them and their party.

DOUGLASS: So Dymally was very active?

STIERN: Yes. Which, incidentally, strikes a nerve with my ownself in something I read in one of your papers out here, and I wanted to mention to you. I don't know if this is the place to mention it or not.

About the way my district was realigned. I want to talk to you about that because there has been a lot of misconception of why that was

done. How did I get into Los Angeles County in Pasadena, and that kind of thing? There is an inference by some that that was planned that way to help me. But it really was not. And there is a reason why it was done. And I want you to learn what that was before you break this up. But I don't know whether this is the proper place to take it up.

DOUGLASS: I have it on the agenda. So we will get to that. But, Dymally, did he choose to preside very much?

STIERN: He only came up when we were breaking tie votes. No, he did not. And Harmer was there such a short time, just a matter of a couple of months.

DOUGLASS: Right. He just filled in.

STIERN: And he was a very sober, very conservative person. Very hard working, very dedicated Republican member. I think he did the best he could, serving his party and serving the senate during that little interval there.

Mike Curb (1979-1982)

DOUGLASS: Well, then you had Mike Curb coming in as a Republican lieutenant governor, with Jerry Brown as the governor. What was Curb like?

STIERN: Well, Curb really didn't do anything. You just rarely saw him at all. He came in the senate a couple of times to break ties. He never

intermingled with the members or came up into the coffee room to sit down to make himself well known. He was rather aloof in his manner. Probably he had designs on being governor some day. He worked with. . . . He was a young man who had no experience in government at all.

DOUGLASS: Did he choose to preside very often?

STIERN: No. Not at all. Actually, he kind of shunned away from it, rather than presiding. And, you know, wound up by publicly making a statement which came back to haunt him that the lieutenant governor's job was nothing. It was a do-nothing, know-nothing, useless, sterile, castrated position where you couldn't do anything, and a worthless position and office. And then when he made his attempt to come back, had to eat those words. Who was it ran against him? [H. L.] Bill Richardson?

DOUGLASS: Oh, in the primary?

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Yes. He lost out the next round.

STIERN: He had a struggle and had to eat his words, you know. He was not very effective in the senate process at all. Technically, he was president of the senate.

Leo T. McCarthy (1983-)

DOUGLASS: How about Leo McCarthy, who is lieutenant governor?

STIERN: Leo McCarthy is a very amiable kind of a person. The kind of a person who will leave his office and come up and visit the senate when controversial measures that come up and share ideas. Just by personality, he is just outgoing, likes to be with people. He can talk as easily with Republicans as he can with Democrats. Has in mind some day being governor of California, I think that he wants to very badly. And he is a typical product of San Francisco politics, which follows a pattern which is a little different from the rest of the state, where you have a city and county combined together, and all the intrigue that that develops. I think he is effective and did a good job.

DOUGLASS: Okay. And was there any particular problem when you had a lieutenant governor of a different party from the governor? Did that seem to affect how these people acted when they were presiding over the senate?

STIERN: One of the interesting things is that. . . . That happened on two occasions, didn't it.

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: It happened where a Republican governor had a lieutenant governor who was a. . . .
Let's take it in two pieces. When Curb was lieutenant governor and Jerry Brown would leave

the state, he was in trouble because Curb would try to take advantage of that. Whereas when Deukmejian leaves the state, he gets absolute cooperation from McCarthy.

DOUGLASS: No. I understand that. But what I meant is did you see any impact of that in terms of party politics and what happened in the senate? In other words, did it affect that?

STIERN: No. It didn't affect the senate.

XVIII. THE STATE SENATE IN THE 1970S

1971 Tax Law

DOUGLASS: All right. Let's move on then. In '71, there was a tax law passed which you were very involved in. It ended up being called A.B. 1, by [William T.] Bagley, but you had introduced a bill, S.B. 523. This all was addressing the need to eliminate the deficit and reduce local property taxes. I wanted to discuss that with you. Because you had introduced your bill, and it went to the Senate Finance Committee. And then apparently there was some discussion about giving the Republicans credit for getting a bill through on this question. And so the decision was to let Bagley carry a bill which more or less incorporated your provisions. Do you recall this?

STIERN: I am a little bit foggy on that, to be honest

with you.

DOUGLASS: Apparently, this also became a bargaining tool in conjunction with reapportionment. And so the point is that the bill wasn't your bill. It became Bagley's bill. And this is when withholding was incorporated, increasing the corporate tax rates, giving tax relief to the elderly, and creating a Bagley fund of $150 million. And this was really the beginning of an attempt to address the coming tax revolt, or the need to give relief to property owners.

STIERN: It must have been a bill in which Bagley and I were enough in tune that we were able to pirate two bills and put one together and let him have his name on it.

DOUGLASS: Yes. It was interesting because, apparently, you had introduced your own bill. And he had introduced his own bill.

STIERN: I am going to have to go back into the bill files on that one before I could make any comment on that one.

DOUGLASS: All right. Well, this is the beginning of the whole question that started rolling on what do you do with the fact that you have got to address the taxpayers' attitudes.

STIERN: This kind of thing. You know, your mind jumps from one thing to another. Which brings up

another subject in which I am not unproud of at all, but for which I didn't get any credit at all. And I wasn't searching for credit. Like I say, I don't put my name on bills.

Bicultural Education

I had the first bill of any value in bilingual, bicultural education. And I carried it, and I developed it. And I worked with Hispanics in universities and state universities, trying to learn all I could about English as a second language against bilingual, bicultural education and coming up with a good bill. And as I was developing it, I became aware that if I wanted my input on this, carrying it as a Stiern bill, that I wasn't going to get it. Because some way or another I had to back up and work this out and get a Hispanic author, if I wanted to see real success on this.

And that's what we did. I remember sitting with a group of some fifteen Hispanic educators in California and saying that we need. . . . A man who helped me with this, and knew of my seriousness and concern and dedication to this idea, said, "I think you are wise, Walter, doing that." I backed up, turned it over to Assemblyman Chacon, Peter [R.] Chacon, in San Diego County. He carried the bill, and it

passed. And that was the first train going down the track on bilingual, bicultural bills. And what is interesting to me about that is that those bills also have been placed into the legislative codes of Florida and New York, as it relates to things that affect Cubans and Puerto Ricans.

DOUGLASS: Was this in the seventies?

STIERN: It was. Yes. It could have been earlier than that. But it is an example of how sometimes, to get what you want, you get back and shoehorn something another way to get it passed. And, of course, when we did that, and all the Hispanic organizations in the state, working with Chacon, brought these to pass and had these things happen.

Willie Brown and Martin Luther King Day

I did this with another bill that is another story, but I will tell you about it separately. And we'll see if you want to get into it or not. It had to with Martin Luther King Day and when Willie Brown first came to Sacramento and nobody knew who Willie Brown was.

DOUGLASS: All right. Then tell it.

STIERN: One of the first bills that he got, that he would not have gotten unless I had come up with something to help him with it. And Willie Brown

always has had a soft spot in his heart for Walt Stiern because he pulled him out of a situation in the Senate Finance Committee where he would have gone down in flames if we hadn't made a minor change. This was Willie's initial session.[1] It was launching him, and you saw the potential that this man had. If you want to talk about that, I'll talk to you about it some time. But it's another bill where you make a change.

DOUGLASS: You assisted him.

STIERN: There would be no Martin Luther King Day if it hadn't been for that incident that happened.

DOUGLASS: What needed to happen to the bill? Why was it in the Finance Committee?

STIERN: I might as well tell you the story, I guess, right now. He came to the legislature with a commitment, a lot of legislators do this. "One of the first things I am going to do is do this." And what Willie was going to do was have Martin Luther King Day or Week. And he was going to have that come hell or high water. I was on the Finance Committee, and the Finance Committee was made up of a conservative bunch of older senators that were the hardest to deal with for a young man with a new idea of something like that. And you have to remember

1. Willie Brown began serving in the assembly in 1965. This bill (A.B. 211, Ch. 1256) passed in 1970.

how things were in those days, early on, when Martin Luther King was on the move.

And so he had no problem getting through the assembly. And he went through the policy committee on the senate side, and I think that that was the Education Committee, if memory serves me right. And then he had to go to the Senate Finance Committee because any bill that has money in it or infers that there will be money in it or cost has to go to the Finance Committee. So the people who were racist kind of people, the people who did not like black people, who did not want anything to do with Martin Luther King, who didn't like Willie Brown, people who have racist attitudes, were saying, "Well, we are not going to worry about this bill. It is never going to get past the Finance Committee in the senate, and that will take care of that."

Well, the bill came to the Senate Finance Committee. And he had designated Black History Week, with Martin Luther King's birthday being in that week. And you can imagine what the reaction was on that committee with some people who were not going to sit still for that. And they didn't. The members of the committee called Martin Luther King everything under the

sun. He was a Communist, he was Communist oriented, he was a jillion different things. And Willie Brown was doing the best he could, trying to sell his bill, and he was getting nowhere fast. I was sitting there. I could see what he was doing. What he was trying to do seemed all right with me.

And so I went down to him. I said, "Willie, put the bill over, and I think we have a better idea that we can work out." And he was just beside himself, you know.

DOUGLASS: Was he amazed that you would suggest that?

STIERN: He didn't expect that from me. He didn't know me at all. And I could see the dilemma. I knew what he was trying to do. I could see his frustration. We do have black citizens in this state, and I couldn't see anything wrong with what he was trying to do. He calls me "Walta," as if my name is spelled W-A-L-T-A, Walta. He is from Texas, and it is part of his speech. I am always Walta, to Willie. And Willie says, "Well, Walta, if you want me to, I will." So I said, "Just tell them you want to pass the bill to the file, and we will take it up next week or the week following. We'll come back to this bill." So he said, "All right. That's what I'll do." So he said to the chairman, the chairman was George Miller, and he said,

"Senator Miller, I would like to put the bill over, and we will take it up at a later date." And so Miller said, "Fine. We'll put the bill over, we'll put it over and set it. The next bill is number so-and-so," and we went on.

I got out and went down to him. And I said, "Let's go to Dymally's office." And I said, "I've got an idea, and I think it will save the day for you." He said, "Well, what is the idea?" And I said, "Dymally has a book in his office. I have seen it. I walked in one time and just picked it off his shelf and thumbed through it. And it's an interesting book because what it is talking about is famous, outstanding blacks and their imprint on American history." And I said, "I remember seeing an engraving on one page with this story about a man whose name was Crispus Attucks."

DOUGLASS: Oh, yes.

STIERN: And Crispus Attucks was a black man who fell at the Boston Massacre on the Boston Square against British musketry and redcoats, one of the first to die. We don't know when he was born. He was a slave and nobody knows. But we do know where and when he died. And so we tell this story of Crispus Attucks, and we say we want a Black History Week. And we want it the week of Crispus Attucks' death on the Boston Square.

And if we have to, we'll tell the story in detail, and I'll back you up on it. I don't think three-fourths of those people on the committee even know who Crispus Attucks is. So I got some pictures and reproduced this thing and handed it out. [Laughter]

And so comes the day when out of file comes this bill by Willie Brown from San Francisco, Black History Week [Black American Day] bill, with the date of the death of Crispus Attucks on the Boston Square. And so Willie is starting to talk about this thing. [Laughter] I am passing out reproductions of the page out of the book in Dymally's office. And I said, "I know this story well. It's on all kinds of etchings of the times. It's in many history books. And there he is, laying on the square. He is a black man, and he is dead. And he was a slave. And I want somebody on this committee to tell me that he was a Communist, unfit, disloyal, not fighting for our principles. And the first one who will, I want to know who he is, because I'll take him on." And Willie standing there with a grin on his face from ear to ear. And "how could you not vote for a bill like that?" And the bill went out like a knife going through hot butter. And in California we have the Black History Week. And that's how that passed.

Willie has never forgotten that. That's in his mind to this day. And even in 1986, I remember something came up, and somebody came to him about some horrible thing I did. And Willie said, "I know Walta would never have done a thing like that." And he called me in with this man, in his office, before him, and we had a showdown. The things behind the scenes like make this such an interesting process. But there is a bill where I helped a minority man with something that he was having trouble with in the same way that I was helping minorities going through Chacon brought something about which otherwise wouldn't have happened under my name.

DOUGLASS: So it is reaching a goal through the best means.

STIERN: Right.

Voting Age

DOUGLASS: I wanted to ask you about one vote in '71. That was when the eighteen-year old vote passed, and you had apparently voted against it in '70 and switched your vote in '71 and voted for it. You and Kennick, [Fred W.] Marler [Jr.], and [James E.] Whetmore. Why did you change your mind?

STIERN: I didn't think we should lower the vote. And on the basis that I just felt that there were so

many people that are immature that I knew at eighteen that I found it strange to think that they were going to be able to make the decisions that they would make if they were to have that vote at eighteen. We have a counter thing in our ballot, in law, we have a constitutional amendment that relates to not letting them use liquor or alcoholic beverages until they are twenty-one. And this is an annoying thing today, even to this day, because it did pass.

But what I think turned me around was the fact that you could send a soldier to Vietnam if he is eighteen years old, and he can't even vote at home for anything or participate in any way. I think I voted a strange. . . . I convinced myself that if you can take a person and put them in combat at eighteen, which you can do, then that person should have a right to help make political decisions in his city, county, township, state, or wherever he was. And, of course, it did a lot of things. It allowed younger people to make contracts. It allowed younger people to marry at a younger age without parental permission. It allows them to vote at a younger age. It did a lot things, made a lot of changes. And I kept thinking about states like Georgia and Mississippi and states that do have that. And I thought there was good logic

of why we shouldn't lower that age. Doesn't the Vietnamese period come in that?

DOUGLASS: Yes, '71, it was still on. Kids were being pulled out.

STIERN: I was seeing all kinds of kids who were eighteen and then going into war. And I was saying, "I think I must have been wrong. If I have no control over my life and that can be done to me at eighteen, then I should have a right to vote." I think that was the deciding point.

Select Committee on School Finance

DOUGLASS: Also, in August of '71, there was a Select Committee on School Finance appointed, and that followed the Serrano-Priest decision, which was in August of '71. And you were appointed by the Senate Rules Committee. There were Republicans and Democrats to, I guess, start studying the response that the senate would have to that question. Rodda was chair, with you, Rodda, Collier, Teale, Moscone on the Democratic side. And then Grunsky, Dennis Carpenter, Harmer, and Deukmejian on the Republican side. Do you recall, was it because of your longstanding interest and activity in education that you were put on that?

STIERN: That I was put on that? Oh, yes. And I was in positions that. . . . What was that year?

DOUGLASS: It was '71. So you were Finance . . .

STIERN: I was on the Education Commmittee and had been showing great interest in universities and colleges. And, also, I was coming from a rebellious county on unification.

DOUGLASS: Then the financing too, because it was the financing that was unconstitutional.

STIERN: Right. That was the logic, I think, of my being on there.

DOUGLASS: Do you recall anything about the deliberations of that select committee? I don't know how long it stayed in place.

STIERN: As I recall, not too long. And it was to look at what seemed to be strange and terrible inequities, where you had the different amounts of money per child because a family just by chance lived in a certain school district, the inequity of that. Why should a child who would be in a poor school district have to have inferior education to a child who happened to come from a very wealthy one. And we were all caught up in that, saying "children should not have that inequity just because of the wealth of two counties being extremely rich or extremely poor."

And, of course, along with that there comes. . . . I am trying to think of a term. It's not unification. It is equalization.

DOUGLASS: The low-wealth districts?

STIERN: Low-wealth, high-wealth districts. What is the. . . . We (Kern County) would have to give up tremendous amounts of money to Calaveras County on the basis of county's oil wealth. And the furor was that that would bleed a county like Kern dead.

DOUGLASS: How did your constituents respond to this?

STIERN: Well, they wanted representation on that because they didn't want an oil severance tax. If you are a representative of this county, you don't go for a severance tax.

DOUGLASS: How did that affect you?

STIERN: Well, I played it straight on. And, of course, I had to face that fact that Kern County, you know, was blocking unification and playing an independent role; had these pockets of wealth that no one can really justify. Because, you know, we talk about pockets of wealth like McKittrick and Maricopa, where you have a million dollars assessed valuation behind each child; but then we have lots of districts that have $500,000 behind each assessed child. We have ones with $100,000 behind them. And Bakersfield was like $26,000 behind them. I could see the inequities of it.

DOUGLASS: So you didn't have trouble with the

Serrano-Priest decision?

STIERN: No. I didn't at all.

Reapportionment and the 1974 Election

DOUGLASS: Why don't we talk now a little bit about reapportionment. The reapportionment between '72 and '74. Because that was when, if you will recall, the supreme court denied the legislature's reapportionment of the senate, assembly, and the congress because Reagan had vetoed the legislature's plan and the court said because the governor vetoed it, the plan didn't have any legal status. And, also, since there was no time for the court itself to draw up a new plan for '72, they allowed in that election temporarily for the existing. . . .

[End Tape 7, Side B]

[Begin Tape 8, Side A]

DOUGLASS: That was upheld by the Supreme Court. What I am getting down to, this is when they decided that the even-numbered districts had to run and the odd-numbered didn't. And you were an even-numbered district, now No. 16. And you got Inyo County, Kern County (except for a small portion), the high desert of San Bernardino and Los Angeles County, with Antelope Valley and a portion of the Santa Clarita Valley. Which made it a 34,000 square mile district, or one-fifth

of the California land mass. How did you feel about that?

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: How did you feel about that? [Laughter]

STIERN: [Laughter] I felt terrible about it. And it's hard to explain to people, especially when you go to other parts of the state. They can't realize what that's like. They don't recognize the difficulty of that, to have an area of that size. The difficulty of representing it is horrendous because you are dealing from the San Luis Obispo County line to the Arizona line. You are dealing from the Fresno County line down into Los Angeles County. You know, when you are talking about reapportionment, you try to have some kind of continuity between the areas that are involved, and you can't.

DOUGLASS: Was there any other district anywhere near that big?

STIERN: Yes. There was one, but it wasn't quite as big. And that was the one where Randolph Collier was. All those northern counties in the north state. There are a lot of little counties up there. Like thirteen little counties that have small population, and it was heavily wooded area and timber area and mountain area. Where mine, a lot of it was desertous area.

DOUGLASS: Well, first of all, did you see a political

threat in this? Did you feel you would have any trouble carrying that newly created district?

STIERN: Well, you can always see a battle mounted from the outside, except that the weight of the district was the greater Bakersfield area. It was obvious you had to win the greater Bakersfield area to win. I don't think that you could win coming from Bishop, or coming from Barstow, or coming from Palmdale, or some place like that, outside. So I always knew that I had to take the greater Bakersfield area. And if I got that and a fair shake of the outlining counties, that I would make it.

But the logistics of going to meetings and being at everything that you were requested to go to in those areas, just the time factor alone is horrendous. And I always have a feeling in my mind that when you had a multiple-county district, you might be accused of putting more of your time to your residential county district than you would the other counties. And I used to bend over backwards trying to get to meetings in these other counties to prove or show to those people that I really was concerned with what they were interested in, and I wanted to hear what their problems were. And I think I did a fairly good job of selling that concept.

DOUGLASS: Now, as you would walk up to an election like this, would you just pragmatically start watching pretty carefully what your voting record was going to look like, in terms of your own constituency? In other words, would you start to watch? Most people do it.

STIERN: I figured I knew my county very well and how they felt and thought, and it was a very, very conservative area. And the territory I was being given was particularly an extremely conservative area. You know, Democrats don't win in Lancaster and Palmdale and in Bishop and in conservative territory like that. The people are conservative people, rugged individualists, or they wouldn't be out there, in the first place, living in those kind of places. And I was conscious of the fact that they were going to be hard to take. And they were hard for me to take. I lost in Inyo County one year, to my knowledge, and I lost in Antelope Valley one year. No matter what I would do or what I did or how many times I went, I would lose it.

DOUGLASS: Was your approach then, really, to kind of stick with the notion that if you could win Kern County, that was the most important thing to accomplish?

STIERN: You had to take the greater Bakersfield area,

preferably take your own home county, or you are out.

DOUGLASS: Yes. You are not going to make it on these peripheral . . .

STIERN: That's right. They won't help you.

DOUGLASS: The California Journal wrote you up as having bolted the Democratic majority 43 percent of the time right about the time of this election, as compared to 23 percent of the time in '73. You began, as you know, to have a reputation for independence from the party. I wondered what those reasons were.

STIERN: I really think it was pretty much always that way, in that if you sat down and polled the Republicans in the senate and said, "Out of all the Democrats, who are the three most conservative Democrats?," they would include my name in the tree. And they would probably put Robert Presley in as one of them. And they would probably put Ruben Ayala in as one of them. They might even include Rose Ann Vuich. That is really the core. They are not the Roberti-type Democrat. They are usually the Democrat that comes from the rural, farming areas. They tend to be more conservative.

DOUGLASS: Well, it is interesting, because as I have listened to you talk, your ideas are fairly

liberal, and I wondered how you felt about this. Because, after all, if you are not reelected and don't get up there, you are not going to be able to do anything for anybody. Were you ever torn between those two things?

STIERN: Oh, yes.

DOUGLASS: In other words, your agenda that you . . .

STIERN: How I felt and my district?

DOUGLASS: How you felt about things.

STIERN: Absolutely, absolutely. And my Republican brother, who loves to tell people, he says, "I can't believe the people that are coming out to the veterinary hospital." He says, "I have Republicans come in who say, 'I always vote for Walter because he is a very conservative person and I like the way he votes.'" And he says, "The next person will come in say, 'I always vote for Walter because he is a liberal person, and I think I can always vote. . . .'" He says, "People never know what he is. They don't know what he. . . . He votes both ways. If something looks conservative, you may find him supporting it. If it's extremely liberal, he may or may not be supporting it."

DOUGLASS: How did you decide? You know, everybody looks at the voting record, and, of course, these independence ratings are only based on those issues where there is a real party stand,

anyway? Did you walk some kind of a tightrope where you decided, "Okay, this is really important. This is only marginally important. I might as well give a more conservative vote on the marginally important thing."? How did you pragmatically kind of cope with that?

STIERN: Well, it depends on where you are and what the subject matter is. For example, I will look like the most conservative person in the world in the senate, probably as conservative as H. L. Richardson if he voted (if he was even present to vote) on an issue of putting a student on the governing board. Every time that happened, I would vote "no." I can't conceive of putting a student on the State Board of Education, on the Regents of the University of California, on the board of trustees of the state college system, on the community college governance board. All the way down. I don't see what a student brings to a thing like that. How picking a student up from a school, or a high school, and putting them on a board. . . . If they want to be there, let them run for it like anybody else. They can do that if they want to. A person who goes to be educated doesn't have very much to offer, I don't think, on the governance of a public thing. So if you look at a record

anywhere, you will never find Walt Stiern ever voting for that kind of thing. Now that throws me in the conservative side. You see.

On the other hand, when you see something where I resented the fact that I had a relative that lost his job, that people lost their jobs because ballots had a certain political color and the posting of it, it was posted (we went through this before), I don't think it's any of government's business what you are. You have a right to vote. And I am looking for the poorest of poor and the one with the least representation to do that.

And it's interesting what some people call conservative and what they call liberal. That has to always be defined before you get into things because people have different conceptions of what that is. But I know I come from very conservative turf. It's highly agricultural, with big agriculture, corporate agriculture. I come from oil turf, which is a lot of oil representation here. It's land to be developed. It's pioneer families. The school trends have been set, and people don't like them changed. They like them the way they are, and they will fight that kind of thing. When you run into something; the death penalty was one that I have always had problems with and finally voted to

support the death penalty. That's another shift in my career because if you are representing people, you have to do what people want that you represent. I am not sent there to make my own decision.

DOUGLASS: It's really amazing that you, a Democrat, were able for twenty-eight years to . . .

STIERN: Ride through all that.

DOUGLASS: Yes. If you had to name one or two single reasons, what do you think they are?

STIERN: One reason is that when I speak on the floor or I say anything, I don't misrepresent. I never knowingly lied or misrepresented or have been caught in that kind of thing. If I take a position, I have good logic for taking it. I don't shoot from the hip. And I don't like people who do. I don't think that is a very good way to make a judgment. But if you show the logic, the reasoning, and the necessity, the need, and can illustrate that, a senator who is from a totally different kind of a district, can go along with you, even if he is of the other party. Because he will say, "You know, Walter knows his district. What he is talking to makes sense." And my colleagues are aware that I have done things many, many times that did nothing for me and my district, but gave some parts of

the state something that they didn't have and what everybody else had.

DOUGLASS: But how did that help you get elected in your district, though?

STIERN: That gave me strength in the senate. In my own district, I recognized key things. That agriculture had to have water, and I supported things to get water down there. That the oil economy did not want a severance tax, the county did not want their money taken out of their county for developments of other parts of the state. I have always fought the severance as a county position. I struggled to get a four-year college here because I think this area of the state is deserving. It's the only area in the United States that doesn't have a four-year college within 100 miles.

And I would take what I think are strong, sterling positions. And I make a point, I try very hard to make a point, where somebody can't stand up and say, "Well, Walt Stiern lied to us. Here is what he said, and here is the fact." And nobody, to my knowledge, has ever been able to do that. And so when my lady opponent started doing that, she was in hot water. And I had women come to me who you would think might be attracted to a woman, had Republicans come to me and say, "Walter, she is going to lose. You

are going to win this election because she is lying about you. We know that you didn't do that." And I had that kind of a trust that would give me support. You always hear the politician promise them and promise everything. I have always said, "I have never ever, ever promised anything at any time to anybody except that I would do the very best I could under the circumstances. I was working with thirty-nine other people. You know, you don't always get what you want. You can fight to explain and show need of, and all this kind of thing. But, you know, I've had my losses as well as my successes."

DOUGLASS: Well, getting back to the '74 election, you were again targeted and ran against someone named [LeRoy M.] Jackson?

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: And won a smashing victory, apparently.

STIERN: Yes. He was a Kern County supervisor. It was a hard race, and one of those races where a lot of things were said that were true and not true. Not everybody liked Jackson. He had a background where people remember some of his business dealings. And they also remembered some of his divorces and the way he handled his wife and children. He happened to be from

Ridgecrest, the east part of the county. That's the area he had been supervisor from. But out there, when you get into that, they knew about his private life and things like that. And he had a lot of problems with that kind of thing. But he ran a pretty hard race.

Proposition 1--1974 Election

DOUGLASS: All right. Why don't we talk about the events that kind of led up to Reagan's Proposition 1 in '73. This whole business of dealing with the fact that the surplus was accumulating, due partly to withholding, which the governor reluctantly eventually went along with, and the one cent sales tax increase proposed. You had a bill in '73 which was to delay the imposition of the sales tax for six months and eliminate income tax for people with an income of $8,000 or less. [S.B. 425] Could you comment about this whole situation leading up to Prop. 1?

STIERN: I am always leary of a situation where you develop a surplus and then you feed back certain amounts of money to the public. Deukmejian is getting ready to do that right as this moment. And I think he is getting involved. You see, he is kind of following a pattern of Ronald Reagan, who is kind of hero of his. But the problem with this is that you usually cannot do this without it being it more costly than what it is

worth. So you start looking and explaining and saying, "Why does this governor want to do this? What's the reason for that. Why would he want to do that? How do you treat this? You can't give it back to the people you took it from. It's impossible." Like sales tax. You know, the sales tax spent by people who are out of state who bought things here.

DOUGLASS: How do you rebate it?

STIERN: You can't. There is no fair way of doing this. And so usually you start thinking, "Well, maybe there is some political skullduggery involved. You look like a nice man. You've got this big reserve, you don't need it. And so you shuffle it back to the people. And maybe you are doing it because you want to run for higher office or do something you want people to think well of you." And that's the wrong way to go.

Now this comes back from the Rev and Tax [Revenue and Taxation Committee]. If you have a surplus in California of a million dollars, and you say, "Well, we don't need this. So I am going to give this back to the people. You wind up by giving something like $52.50, or something like that, a taxpayer with some kind of basic evidence that you are a taxpayer. But, at the same time, you will save money beyond belief if

you had rather funneled that into your school system, into your highway system, into your library system, into your park and recreational system, and that type of thing, for all the people of California, rather than trying to get it back to where it rightfully belongs. Which you can't do because you don't know how much any one of these people gave. And so it has a hollow ring to me, and I really think that if you are going to give back, okay. One of the most wonderful places that you can give it back would be to the community college system, with 107 campuses all over this state. Why don't you do this and help all the people in, we'd say 107 campuses and we'd say how many districts, I think there are fifty-eight districts or sixty-two districts, some are multi-campus systems, but feed it back that way and save money. Don't do it with some expensive way where it costs you more money to turn it back than what is to be turned back.

DOUGLASS: But the purpose of your bill was apparently to deflect the surplus from accumulating by delaying the collection. Do you recall that bill?

STIERN: It sounds on the surface of it to me like we were accumulating faster, and taking money faster, than we needed it.

DOUGLASS: Yes. By that time, in '73, there was an $827 million surplus.

STIERN: There is never a surplus, you know. There is always "an obscene surplus." [Laughter] And trying to fairly slow that down, turn off the spigot of where you are taking the money from, to have it kind of level out, seems to me as good a way of going as to try to send back credit checks to taxpayers.

DOUGLASS: Doesn't this really go back to this earlier altercation you had with Reagan about his tax program?

STIERN: Similar, yes.

DOUGLASS: Meanwhile, he was threatening, wasn't he, that he would put Prop. 1 on the ballot. That is, his plan for limiting the ability of the legislature to raise taxes. It's a tax limit, and it failed. But I suppose, as a member of the legislature, you could see that he was going his own way, trying to do this?

STIERN: Well, as I recall, there were several other bills at the same time. There was one that Peter Behr had in the senate which we had almost developed to the point of having something put on the ballot that sounded very sensible. But nobody wanted to wait for this. They kind of said, "Well, we have had it up for discussion

for twelve years, and the legislature can't make up their minds. They can't give us something. They can't give us relief. So we will just do it on our own kind of a basis." I am a little foggy on that. I would want to go back.

DOUGLASS: Yes. Well, at this point, the Democrats were saying, "Hey, let's wait a year to put the sales tax on, deflecting this surplus that was developing." And the Republicans wanted to wait only six months. And I think it all came to a grinding standstill, and, therefore, then I think the governor just said, "All right. I am going to go for my Prop. 1."

In '74, too, Jerry Brown defeated [Houston I.] Hugh Flournoy. How did you look at that election? Did you think Flournoy would win? What did you think Brown's chances were?

STIERN: No. I didn't think Flournoy would win. I felt Jerry was riding a lot on his father's reputation and name. And Flournoy was not well known. He was controller. He is a product of USC, I knew that.

DOUGLASS: No. Flournoy was a Princeton graduate.

STIERN: I mean that he is involved with USC.

DOUGLASS: Now. But that was after this.

STIERN: I didn't mean that he formerly came from there. But he had USC connections. So he is a southerner, and you are going to have some

north-south fight.

DOUGLASS: He was actually a professor at Pomona College, in Government.

STIERN: How long was he there?

DOUGLASS: Well, he was elected to the assembly for six years. Then he had decided to quit and go back to college teaching, and they [the Republican party] asked him to run for controller. He came in on the Reagan sweep, to his amazement, as controller.[1] Then he decided to go for governor.

STIERN: Controller is a good place to be. It sometimes gets you into the U.S. Senate. In California history, it has. Where somebody dies, and the governor appoints the controller to the U.S. Senate. So it's a jumping . . .

DOUGLASS: Well, at any rate, you felt he wasn't known. You thought Brown had a good chance.

STIERN: He was not well known, and I felt that the persuasion of the state was more Democrat than it was Republican. There was this north-south fight to get over. We didn't think he (Flournoy) was going to make it. And I didn't know really an awful lot about Brown either. Take it and you are buying a pig in a polk. And with Brown, not enough was really known about him at that time.

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1. Assemblyman, 1961-1966; controller, 1967-1974.

Zenovich Challenge of Mills as Pro Tem

DOUGLASS: There was an attempt in '75 to remove Mills in favor of George Zenovich which failed.

STIERN: To remove who?

DOUGLASS: To remove Mills as pro tem in favor of George Zenovich of Fresno, and it failed. Where did you stand in that vote?

STIERN: Where was I in that dogfight?

DOUGLASS: This was '75.

STIERN: I really didn't play very much of an active part in it. I knew both of these men, and I liked both of these men. And it got into a situation where I could see that you were probably going to make a friend for life and an enemy for life. And I didn't relish getting involved in that at all. I remember trying to stay clear of it as much as I could. When that challenge came, Zenovich lost, I remember, and Mills won, was able to sustain himself. And, of course, Mills never forgave Zenovich for challenging him.

DOUGLASS: Do you think you supported Mills basically? Or do you recall? You had to vote at some point, I suppose.

STIERN: Yes. I think that. . . . As I recall, I stayed with Mills because I felt he was doing a good job and there was no reason to replace him. And Mills is a very serious person. Zenovich is a very gregarious person. Zenovich was made

appellate court judge by Brown. When Brown went out of office, he (Zenovich) became part of the Fresno appellate court. And he gave that up eventually because it was too boring. He liked the excitement of Sacramento and came back as a lobbyist, and has been lobbying from Sacramento. And it is rare of you to find a person giving up an appellate court now to become a lobbyist in Sacramento.

DOUGLASS: Yes. He found it too dull probably.

STIERN: Well, and then he got into a firm that is making money hand over fist. It's the Dennis Carpenter firm. And he probably makes much more money than he would as an appellate judge. But he likes the excitement of Sacramento. Mills was very sober, very serious. He seemed to me that he was taking his job seriously. That he just would do a better job.

Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee

DOUGLASS: All right. In '75, you were appointed to the Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee, and you served on that from '75 to '76. Number one, how did you happen to get appointed?

STIERN: I don't know, and I didn't like it. And I didn't stay with it. It's not my cup of tea.

DOUGLASS: Why didn't you like it?

STIERN: Oh, every time you turn around you are running

into a lobbyist. These people wanting to talk to you about this bill, talk about that bill, monopolize your time so that you can't do anything else. I had no great interest in it. I am not that familiar with insurance, and I didn't find it interesting. I just didn't like it.

DOUGLASS: Well, there were senators who woud have seen this as a great opportunity?

STIERN: Oh, yes, it's thought of by some as what's called "a juice committee."

DOUGLASS: Right. Now why is it "a juice committee"?

STIERN: Because people get rewarded for the way they direct and vote on subject matters which are beneficial or detrimental to persons who are concerned with those subjects.

DOUGLASS: Rewarded meaning campaign contributions?

STIERN: Yes. That's true.

DOUGLASS: Did you just decide on your own to go off? Or were you removed? Or how did you go off?

STIERN: No. I asked not to be placed on it on account of I didn't want to continue with it.

First Woman Elected to Senate

DOUGLASS: Okay. Then, in '76, the first woman was elected to the senate, Rose Ann Vuich. How was she treated? The first woman. Like there weren't restrooms. I suppose, there weren't all kinds of things.

STIERN: I had a real hand in that. I talked just a little bit about it when I told you that Tulare County. . . . Her district is Tulare County and a part of Fresno County. I told you about the connection with Zenovich, when he was the senator from Fresno County and same cultural background and belonged to the same church in Fresno. And the woman who was chosen by the central committee to run backed off because her husband developed a terminal disease. And finally the people looked at Rose and said, "Rose, you are going to have to be the person."

She went to Zenovich, thinking she would get some help, and he laughed at her and hurt her feelings terribly. And she couldn't understand why he felt that way. He was saying, "Why in the senate of California, you wouldn't have a prayer getting elected in there. We don't support women candidates in the state senate in California." And somebody said to her, and I never have known who, "Why don't you go see Walt Stiern. He represents Kings County, and you are going to have to have Kings County. You are going to have to operate in that county. Maybe he can help you there. And I am sure that he would have a different attitude." Because it is known that I feel that women are important,

too, and that they have their place in the political world.

And so she did. [Laughter] I remember Rose Ann coming down from Dinuba and coming up the second floor steps in Bakersfield to see me. I knew she was coming. I never had met her. We embraced each other at the top of the stairway. We have been the closest of close friends ever since she has been there. I am glad that I was receptive to her. I think she was a real breath of fresh air in the senate when she came in. She was smart. She was sharp and capable and fair and all the things that you would want in a legislator. Was good with figures, and she's a public accountant and farms with her brother, five hundred acres of orchards. She has just been a tremendous asset in the senate.

In fact, I have seen this happen. And along comes Diane Watson, who I think is equally, I think, a good person. And some of my staff would keep saying [Laughter], "You've got to knock it off with this, especially when you are having a woman opponent down here, and you say, 'There is nothing that more women in the senate wouldn't help.' I am sure your opponent would be willing to back you up.'"

And she came down, and I took her all over Kings County and introduced her to school

superintendents' and teachers' groups and Rotary Clubs and chiefs of police and deputies of groups and everything that I could possibly think of. All kinds of farm organizations, of course, she was involved in Farm Bureau and the Portugese community, which is very big in Kings County. Some of the special things like that. And she was a real natural campaigner. And she became elected over a man who had been an assemblyman, who was in the national guard as a reserve general. And she knocked him off and became the senator from Tulare County.

DOUGLASS: So how was she received at first?

STIERN: Well, at first when she came up there, you know there had been all this talk about "there is no room in here for a woman," and "we can't have a woman senator," and so forth. George Miller used to say [in a gruff voice], "We don't even have a can here for the women." There is not even a restroom for them. How are going to put up with a thing like that?

Well, we did. We made a woman's restroom. Physically, it's an interesting thing. [Laughter] I want you to see it some time.

DOUGLASS: [Laughter] I'll have to go up and see it.

STIERN; You'll have to. If you ever visit the senate again, you tell Rose, or somebody else, "I want

to see the Rose Room." It's called the Rose Room. So they built a women's restroom. It has a toilet, wash basin affair in the inner part of it. It has a little lounge with some used (antique) furniture that they got out of storage for it. A door, and they got a plaque and put it on the door like this. It has no sign on the door except a wooden plaque of walnut, handpainted with a rose in blossom. It's on that door. And that's the Rose Room, and that's Rose's room.

And what's interesting about this is when you can't find any place else to meet and you've got to have something with a caucus of five or six people in it, Rose will say, "You can use the Rose Room." And they do. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: Does it have a lock and key?

STIERN: Nobody is going to use it, except her, anyway. It's her room and her facility. So if she doesn't need to go to the bathroom, she says, "Just use the lounge in the Rose Room." There is a davenport and a mirror on the wall and a little side table. "Fellows, use the Rose Room if you can't find a place to hold your caucus." And that's the Rose Room.

Well, when Diane Watson came up, you know, I kidded Rose. I said, "Well, are we going to have to have another little block on the door.

Diana, the huntress on the door so Diane can use the Rose Room?" [Laughter] She said, "No. Diane can use the Rose Room all she wants. It's the woman's room for women senators. But it's the Rose Room. That's the name of it that was originally given, and we are going to keep it called the Rose Room." And she was very protective of this. [Laughter] But she knows all those stories that were told about "we don't even have a restroom here for women." And she swings with that. And in the coffee room, which is behind the senate chamber, where people go back for coffee or a doughnut or something, very often we have things come in, like a box of nectarines or a box of peaches or a lug of grapes or something like that. Rose puts on her apron, cuts up the peaches and things. And "these are the ripe ones and these are the ones not so ripe." And she looks like the little housewife in there with all the fellows, as she calls them. All she asks is that she have their equality out on that floor. It's not "Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Senate."

DOUGLASS: So it didn't take her too long, it sounds like, to win . . .

STIERN: No. She is well liked.

DOUGLASS: Even those who had the least comfort with it,

did they finally come around?

STIERN: You know they were going to change. You are not going to stay that way in the seventies. She is a likeable, intelligent person. Typical story. Mother and father came steerage from Yugoslavia. Father washed dishes in San Francisco before they got down into Tulare County. She and her brother are both single and carrying on the farmlands there. She is as conservative as any grower in the state, you know. And here you've got Diane out of Los Angeles, totally different background.

DOUGLASS: How was Diane Watson received? And she is black.

STIERN: Well, I think she was received all right. If you have prejudice against black people, and you don't like the way they work and think. Okay. I guess you are going to have some problems. But she is certainly an intelligent lady. You know her background, I am assuming.

DOUGLASS: Well, I know she has almost an advanced degree in education.

STIERN: She has got it. She got her doctorate two months ago. And she comes out of the poorest of poor families. Her father was in law enforcement and worked himself up through the police department. She worked herself through school. Worked her way through Los Angeles

Community [College]. Can make these speeches without end about the times she had no food for lunch because there was no money for lunch, and "you bet that tuition is going to cost and hurt and keep some people out of community colleges." And she went on to UCLA. She has her bachelor's, her master's, her doctorate. She was on the school board of Los Angeles City Schools. She is sharp as a tack. She looks like she is right off of Fifth Avenue, the way she dresses. And she is just a very charming and interesting person.

DOUGLASS: So there are very few left, do you think, who have a thing about much of this.

STIERN: There are several who do. And I could tell you who they are. Probably shouldn't.

DOUGLASS: Go ahead. You can seal it later, if you want.

STIERN: Well, there are people who have done some awfully bad things to her, in efforts to get rid of her. Did I tell you the story about the gun legislation bill she was on?

DOUGLASS: You mentioned something about a senator who is interested in that and how he treated her.

STIERN: Yes. Nobody does that if they have fair feelings, they wouldn't try to take advantage of the ladies. There are some people in there that don't like her. And they don't like her

philosophy or her philosophical position. And I think some of these things are racial feelings that some people have and some people don't have. So I guess there are some of those kind of things. She carries quite liberal legislation. Much more liberal than I have ever carried because Kern County wouldn't accept it. But that doesn't mean that she doesn't try to give the kind of representation that her district has.

DOUGLASS: How does she handle herself on the floor?

STIERN: Very good. She carries a heavy load. She is a workhorse. She is a glutton for work and carries heavy amounts of bills. And then, of course, comes two more women. And this time, two Republican women. Marian [R.] Bergeson, who came across as an assemblyperson to the senate. And [Rebecca Q.] Becky Morgan, who came from the board of supervisors in San Mateo County to the senate as a Republican state senator. And they are all capable women, all four of them. They do very well.

DOUGLASS: So a major, major change.

STIERN: Oh, it is. Of course, Rose liked, you know, to adjourn the 1986 session on the 30th of November by saying, "Gentlemen, you will notice that the senate is now one-tenth women. There are four out of forty. Watch out for the year 2,000."

[Laughter]

1978 Election

DOUGLASS: I wanted to talk about your 1978 race for the senate. First of all, this coincided with Proposition 13 being on the ballot, the famous Jarvis Proposition 13. Did that have any impact on your race?

STIERN: No. Because three counties in the state defeated Proposition 13. Kern County, San Francisco County, and Yolo County. Now that's a strange combination. And Kern County was strongly anti-Prop. 13.

DOUGLASS: Why was that?

STIERN: Because the main part of this county is owned by substantial interests like Standard Oil Company, Richfield Oil Company, Superior Oil Company, Bishop Oil Company. It's also owned by Tenneco West, which was the Kern County Land Company. It is also owned by United States Borax Corporation, out on the desert, which is a powerful company. It's owned by lumber interests in certain parts of it. It's owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, where every other section of land was given if they would put their railroad through here in the early days, and they own farmland galore in this area. And what it would do to all of these

corporate interests was detrimental, and they, with their effects and their clout, and the tone of smaller corporations and companies that followed their patterns just wiped them out in Kern County.

What is strange is that those three counties are so different. San Francisco, it's the city and county of San Francisco. The only thing of its kind in the state. And they defeated it. In Yolo County, which was strictly an agricultural county, with a university campus on one end of it, wiped it out. And all the rest of the counties voted for it. So it didn't bother me at all.

DOUGLASS: You didn't have to deal with that as an issue?

STIERN: No.

DOUGLASS: "Where do you stand on that?" kind of thing.

STIERN: That's what flushed in Don Rogers. You see, he was one of the Prop. 13 babies, as they are called. And it also flushed in [Philip D.] Phil Wyman, the other assemblyman from this county.

DOUGLASS: Rogers was elected to the assembly, you mean, that year?

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: And where did he stand on Prop. 13?

STIERN: Oh, he was all out for it. And so was Wyman. And that's kind of interesting because Rogers is a geologist by profession and worked in

petroleum geology. But his strength of being extremely conservative went along with what was trying to be done by Jarvis and Company at that time. And he came in on that and has always held to that position all the years he has been there. When I was talking to him and asking if he thought he could support something, he would say, "How does that log in on Prop. 13." And if it was an anti-Prop. 13, it was a "no" vote.

DOUGLASS: He was straight down the line.

STIERN: He didn't want to risk giving that up.

DOUGLASS: Apparently, this was a fairly easy election for you. You defeated someone named [W. R.] Snyder?

STIERN: I defeated a man whose name was Snyder, who was a certified public accountant from Bishop in Inyo County. To be honest with you, I don't think you can win this seat, swinging from Inyo County. And I described it to people. I said, "I can see the flaw in it. If the Republican party could have found a good candidate in Kern County to run against me, they should have done it." And, apparently, they were not able to do it because they nurtured him and brought him along.

[End Tape 8, Side A]

[Begin Tape 8, Side B]

STIERN: I would tell people that I think it is difficult

for somebody to win from Bishop. Because if you look at a map of the senatorial district, it is like an old-fashioned frying pan with a hole in the handle, where you hang it on a nail in the wall in the wall, on the cabin. The frying pan is Kern County. The hole in the handle is Inyo County. And I don't see how you go into a contest where you think you are going to win it with somebody that is so unkown to this county.

STIERN: He was a certified public accountant. He had to do an awful lot of traveling.

DOUGLASS: Had he held elected . . .

STIERN: No. He never held public office. He was a resident of Bishop. And, of course, he did pretty well in Inyo County, but nobody knew him in Kern County. And they didn't know him in the other areas of the district either. So he didn't do well.

DOUGLASS: A guess the tip-off was that you had an overwhelming vote in the primary.

STIERN: I did have. Yes.

DOUGLASS: So you didn't have to put much effort into that one particularly, did you?

STIERN: No. I just had to make myself visible and keep myself seen, and I knew that campaign was not going to cost a lot of money. He didn't have a lot of money to put into it.

DOUGLASS: It must be nice to have one like that?

STIERN: Boy, it's the closest thing to a free ride. And I have never had a free ride.

DOUGLASS: Have you ever had any strong Democratic contenders through this period?

STIERN: My very first race was that.

DOUGLASS: Yes. But after that.

STIERN: No.

DOUGLASS: Nobody questioned. That is one of the biggest problems, if it's a challenge within your own . . .

STIERN: That's right. If you get that, you are going to have a hassle. Now there is a problem coming up in 19. . . .

DOUGLASS: Ninety?

STIERN: When is the next election?

DOUGLASS: Ninety.

STIERN: Ninety would be the next election. There is an interesting thing happening, which has to do with the reapportioned part that goes down into Pasadena. I want to tell you about that when we talk about reapportionment of the district.

DOUGLASS: I did want to ask you. During '78, first of all, to deflect the possibility of Prop. 13, Senator Behr tried to get a bill through that would have limited property tax relief to residential property, whereas, as you know, the Jarvis was . . .

STIERN: Who tried to do that?

DOUGLASS: Behr.

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Do you remember that bill? In other words, do you remember trying to work on legislation that would make more enlightened the [Proposition] 13 thrust by limiting it? That's what he was trying to do, apparently.

STIERN: He had a thing which was becoming Proposition 8 on the ballot.

DOUGLASS: Was that part of his. . . . [Proposition] 8, I remember.

STIERN: Yes. And it had to do with the taxing. And we had a lot of problems with it because the question was: do you tax a residence on a twenty-acre farm or a thousand-acre farm different than you do a resident in town, in a city? And he was having a hard time working that out. The acreage of farmland being taxed differently from a farm home being taxed different than a metropolitan home. And there were so many kinks to work out in that, it took so long that people got exasperated.

DOUGLASS: People got confused by it too.

STIERN: Confused, and they got exasperated.

DOUGLASS: Did you feel that [Proposition] 13 was going to pass statewide?

STIERN: I was hoping that it would not. I was hoping that the legislature could resolve it without having to go to the ballot that way. I think it did make us look like we were not as effective or efficient as we could have been.

DOUGLASS: Sitting on that money, in a sense.

STIERN: That's right. If you are elected to go up and do that kind of a job, you should do it.

DOUGLASS: Also, there was the question of indexing that had been out there. The Republicans were in favor of indexing, and Jerry Brown had been opposed to it. Where did you stand on indexing at that point?

STIERN: As I recall, I stood in the governor's position at that time.

DOUGLASS: Not in favor of it?

STIERN: No.

DOUGLASS: Of course, indexing did lead to this tremendous surplus, partly.

STIERN: Yes.

DOUGLASS: Then the next year, the [Paul] Gann amendment passed, Prop. 4. Where were you in that dialogue?

STIERN: Now was that the one that didn't hold up in court eventually and was thrown out?

DOUGLASS: No. We are still operating under Gann. That's the limit, the one that Deukmejian is now quoting in terms of that you can't spend more

than something that is no greater than the rate of inflation and the percentage of the increase in population. "The spirit of 13," it is called.

STIERN: Without a two-thirds of the people wanting to do so.

DOUGLASS: Yes. And, in fact, the problems of that are now becoming quite real because we are a different state and we have different needs.

STIERN: I opposed it. And probably I opposed it basically on the basis of [Howard] Jarvis, Jarvis and Gann working together. I don't think I ever met in my life a more obnoxious, hateful, bitter, sour individual than Jarvis. He would come up to this capitol and stand on the steps and try to get himself an audience. And then he would criticize maybe ten or twelve legislators in a group, and then we would point out the difficulty of what he was talking about. And saying, "It is very difficult to resolve. Do you have the solution to this?" [imitating Jarvis] "No. I don't have the solution to this. God damn it, that's what you should be doing. Come up with these solutions. What are you sitting up here doing, wasting all this time?"

He was playing kind of a demagogue kind of

a role. His face would get red as a beet. Anger like you couldn't believe. Not thinking out all the situations which were as different in the apartment house area of San Francisco as the farmer in Kern. It was a very, very complex measure, and it hit different areas and different regions of the state differently. It's a hard thing to have. I am not saying to other people that the legislature has all the brains in the world. They don't. That's why we have a way of getting propositions and initiatives on the ballot because sometimes some things are very hard to resolve. But he publicly, and on TV and everything else, would make us look like a bunch of scoundrels, when everybody was working very hard trying to resolve the problem. I always said he was a very unfair man, the way he approached things that way.

DOUGLASS: But he had been out there functioning for years on this kind of thing.

STIERN: Then Gann was just kind of like his shadow everywhere he went, and has tried to assume the position since Jarvis' passing. To get back to Kern County, we were very upset with it. It wasn't hard to be where I was, with a county that was that supportive of my position.

XIX THE 1980S

David Roberti Becomes Pro Tem

DOUGLASS: All right. I think, in 1980, we have already touched on the fact that it was in December of that year that Roberti, while Mills was out of the state, managed to get the pro tem position. And you said that you supported Mills, I think, at that time.

STIERN: Yes, I did.

DOUGLASS: And, interestingly enough, I read that apparently Rose Vuich and Diane Watson and Bill Greene were some of the people who had urged Roberti to make this go for it. Were they interested in changing the status quo, do you think? Or why would they have gone for Roberti?

STIERN: Well, it's hard to tell. I don't think one will ever know because, like I say, when an ambitious person starts wanting to be pro tem and he approaches people who are borderline, what he may promise them if he becomes pro tem sometimes becomes a factor. It could have been, I don't know that it was, but it may have been commitments that he made to them that "if I am pro tem, I'll will see that you get this, that, and the other." Those things always seem to involve themselves. I don't know whether that is true or not, in the case of these particular

people, but it may have been. And Mills had a personality all his own, and I am not sure about Vuich. I would be surprised if she had gone all out for Roberti, because I didn't know that she had.

DOUGLASS: Well, maybe that's an error.

STIERN: That's the first I heard it. I couldn't tell you where she was.

DOUGLASS: Roberti, that change didn't affect any of your committee assignments, did it?

STIERN: No. It did not. He was the floor leader of the Democratic party, and I had not done anything that had hurt him, particularly. In fact, I did a lot of work on the Small Business Committee, which was what's called a select committee. The Select Committee on Small Business Enterprises. He chaired it on paper, but I ran it as chair whenever it met, because he just didn't show up, and I was there and I was the vice chair, and I carried it.

So I developed a lot of the things that carried his name on them, eventually. Where bills were put in that carried the Roberti name, were things that we learned by convening the committee in different parts of the state. He just sheer didn't have time to do it, although it was an interest area of his. He had no reason to dislike me. And if he felt that he

had twenty-one votes, that's the name of the game. If you've got twenty-one votes, you are the pro tem.

DOUGLASS: Were you surprised when that move was made?

STIERN: Yes. I was.

DOUGLASS: You weren't aware that he had been gearing up?

STIERN: No. I don't like that kind of thing. I would much rather have had a caucus of Democrats and he'd announce that he was going to try to go for it, or could see us individually and tell us. But it was kind of. . . . When a man is back east on business for the state and something like this develops quickly, it hardly seemed cricket to me. And I'm not saying that David Roberti isn't a sharp individual and concerned personally. He's ambitious. I don't know where he is going eventually or what he is going to do, but he has the extreme liberal way of operating the Rules Committee, compared to other pro tems.

DOUGLASS: Does he? How does he operate it?

STIERN: Well, I don't think he runs them as much as. . . . He is not as forceful as he might be. To start with, he is put in a strange position. Because the leader of the assembly is such a gregarious, outgoing, outspoken person on the TV tube, radio tube all the time. Tells people in

New York he is the speaker of the California legislature! Which he is not. He is the speaker of the assembly. So then Roberti, by personality and the way he speaks and meets people, is not as spectacular a person as Willie Brown is when Willie Brown is on stage. And so sometimes when things are being developed and you have to get a continuity between the two houses, and the majorities of the two houses, to support or not to support a governor's position, these two men are rivals at times, when maybe they should be working more together.

And then this filters down. You see, it goes on down to who is where, and where they are from. Whether they are metro or whether they are rural. And what they are. It sometimes gets into issues. Into abortion. You know, Roberti is Catholic, and you know where he is on abortion. And where the leadership comes from. You see people opposing him on that. On the other hand, Roberti takes a great position in defense of animals being used for scientific purposes and getting lots of money out of old silent movie actresses who spent the rest of their life working in those areas and giving him money for campaign purposes. He doesn't deny that, and what that does. And that goes at odds with people who are using animals for

scientific purposes, be they psychological or medical or pharmaceutical schools or veterinary schools, or what. So he is a mishmash of a lot of things, and you can like him or dislike him for a lot of things. So it is hard to put your finger on why, why would somebody do something this way or that way in making a judgment call.

I have tried to play it safe in what I believe. What my district's needs were. What I think California needs are. I don't play political games for the sake of political games. I don't think every Republican has horns and a tail, and Roberti does think that way. And we are just different personalities. Yet, once he's in as the pro tem, if that's the will of the majority, I will support the will of the majority. And wish him well and try to help him where I can.

DOUGLASS: This was no problem for you to deal with?

STIERN: No, no.

Reapportionment (1981)

DOUGLASS: Well, let's talk about the next reapportionment in your district, which is an important question. In '81, I guess Roberti had presented a plan for reapportionment, and part of that agenda, I gather, was perhaps annihilate

Richardson's ability to be reelected, by the kind of district it gave him. So it was, I guess, Roberti and [Daniel E.] Boatwright, who was chairman of the Elections and Reapportionment Committee, who fashioned this. And I guess, in addition, Richardson was not only given his bizarre district, but [John] Doolittle, his protege, was supposed to run in another district against a Republican. At any rate, you ended up with your same number, 16, but this time you have Kern County, Kings County; and then in San Bernardino County, you have Barstow and the area around, and in L. A. County, part of Altadena and north Pasadena.

STIERN: Yes. This has to be talked about in, I think, three stages. One is Christmas Past, one is Christmas Present, and one is Christmas Future. [Laughter] Christmas Past, you go back to the reapportionment before that one we are talking about.

The problem was we knew with the one man, one vote concept coming that Stiern's district has to be enlarged. It must be enlarged. Where do you go? Where do you enlarge? What real estate do you take? What's in it? And it comes out interesting because when Harmer and Dymally were doing the map drawing, where Stiern was going to go and where he wasn't going to go, you

got the strangest configuration on a map of a crab, with two legs going out this way, and with claws on them. And the crab is pointed south. And the one crab leg goes into Santa Barbara County, including Goleta and the University of California and all that. But not Santa Barbara itself. All of Santa Barbara County that is not affected by Santa Barbara City itself. So it included Santa Maria and Buellton and all that stuff. And the campus and all that. That was the one claw.

The other claw was going out this way and going into San Bernardino County and as far down as into the city of San Bernardino. And it was a strange thing to look at on a map, because there was room between these claws that was other people's districts. You look at that configuration and figure, "What are you doing here? What is going on?" And it looks like a gerrymander thing. It looks like you are sending out tentacles in a way that will capture certain areas for a sinister purpose.

Well, my phone rang incessantly from students on the campus at the University of California in Santa Barbara, who did not want me down in their area. "We have nothing against you, Mr. Stiern," but they had been fighting

Lagomarsino for years. They hated Lagomarsino. He is a very conservative Republican from Santa Barbara, and they wanted to get rid of him. And they didn't want him going on to congress for sure, which is where he is.

Well, they have a newspaper called The Nexus on the campus down there, and it was just hammering constantly, "We don't want Stiern. We want Lagomarsino. The reason we want Lagomarsino is we want to beat him to death and throw him aside so that he is done with once and for all." It was a carryover, like the Reagan thing in Berkeley, and they were carrying it on down there. And I found myself in a funny position. [Laughter] The whole student body didn't want me, and they didn't even know me. While if they looked at my record, they couldn't see anything they didn't like. But they had this battle going on with Lagomarsino, and they wanted to bring it to an end. "So stay out of here. Do what you can to keep your district out of here."

Well, as the thing wound up, this crab thing did not go. And it became what it was. It became Kern, high desert of San Bernardino, and I was already into Los Angeles County, into Antelope Valley. . . .

DOUGLASS: And Inyo.

STIERN: And Inyo and Palmdale and Acton and all of that area down there. Some of the things that you didn't hear too much about. Lake Los Angeles and all that kind, that was all. . . . Oh, and "Canyon Country," so-called Canyon Country. That was put into this at that time. Why is Stiern put into that? And heavens knows, I didn't need it. It was conservative. The more they went into there, the more conservative it got. And I had lost in Antelope Valley. And Canyon Country, you are getting down there behind Valencia and over into that area. There is nothing in common with Canyon Country and what we were into. But that's what they drew, and that's what it was that time around.

Well, comes the 1982 election coming up and comes that of reapportionment. The true story and false story are interesting here because people believe what they want to believe and you never convince them otherwise. I had no desire to go any farther into Los Angeles County. I don't see any advantage to that at all. The continuity of tying this other kind of territory to things in Los Angeles which are so foreign to my district was not something I needed.

Now if you talk to Republican wheelhorses and people who had to do with this, they were

saying the Democrats in the senate were doing all they could to shore up Stiern's territory because Stiern's territory is getting more conservative and more conservative all the time. Roberti and Alquist and all these people had to find territory to sweeten up with Democrats where in some way it would be more easy for him, and that's why they went farther on down, to the white stripe in the middle of Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena. Well, a person can believe that if they want. But that's not true.

The fact was that I was approached and said, "On a one man, one vote, you have to have 96,000 more people in your district than you have now." And I said, "Get 96,000 people. Now you answer me a question because I have been through this before, with this crab thing, ten years before. Where are you going to find that territory? Are you going to go north and try to take it away from Vuich, who is struggling to hold Tulare and part of Fresno on a one man, one vote? Do you think she is going to be willing lay down and let me take over part of Tulare County? She is not. Because she is fighting for her life to hold her own territory." "Are we going to the coast, where a natural district is [Senator Henry J.] Mello's, which is made up of San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Santa Cruz.

Senator Mello says, 'Walt, stay out of my district, I don't need you here. I've got a perfect district for a senate district, and I don't want you sticking your nose into San Luis Obispo County at all.'" I look east and find that I am already going clear to Needles, to the Arizona line. I said, "Where else can I go there?" And they said, "Well, we are going to run Richardson up through there into Inyo County and something. So you are losing Needles." Needles is only 17,000 people out there anyway.

DOUGLASS: Yes. They haven't got many people out there.

STIERN: And it doesn't do you any good anyway. So I said, "Well, I can't go into Angeles National Forest. There are no people in Angeles National Forest. What is there to gained there?" "Well, there is not a lot to be gained there." And he says, "I am telling you what you are going to do. You are going to have to go farther into Los Angeles County."

Now there was another situation developing. And that's the Glendale situation. And that's with Newton Russell, the senator from Glendale, who is a Republican. When he was an assemblyman, he had Antelope Valley. He had Antelope Valley, and he had Glendale. He had Glendale, Lancaster, and Palmdale. That was his district. It was a half of a senate district,

and that's what he had.

They said to him, "Newt, you've got to be larger. You are in the same boat Walt's in, we have to find more territory for you." And, of course, he says, "Where am I going to go? And if I go, I want conservative territory. I know that Antelope Valley like the palm of my hand. I was assemblyman up there for six years. I would like to have that." So they made a swap. They took him. He was a Republican, and to satisfy Republicans, they ran Newt up into Antelope Valley and gave it back to him. Took it away from me, and they moved over a little bit and dropped me over the mountains to Altadena and into north Pasadena. And the north part of Pasadena happens to be pretty black and pretty brown. So my political enemies would just think, "Well, they just sweetened it up with Walt by giving him blacks and Hispanics and poor whites, to soften it up with him with Democrats down there."

So I say to them, whenever I can, and, of course, you can't talk to all of them and you can't change people's impressions, and I said, "All right. Here is the map. You draw a piece on that map and have 96,000 people out of Los Angeles County, adjacent to Kern and San

Bernardino that sounds like the one vote requirement for me. Now here's the pencil. Show me." And I've never found a person who could do it. I said, "I am going to tell you a story." When I knew I was retiring, I told this story over and over, and I truly believe it. And it's something nobody thinks about. They don't think about it in Kern County. They don't think about it in the other counties. But there are a few people in Pasadena who are thinking about it. And this is the story. I am going to be surprised if we don't see this happen, and the shock is going to be like you can't believe in the area that I am in at the present time. We have always had our own senator in Kern County. Always. Never without one.

The San Joaquin Valley and Bakersfield are growing. I am over the mountains into Los Angeles [County]. I am down to the line on Colorado Boulevard. But, sure we're growing, but we are not growing in the proportion of southern California. You know, we are not doing what's happening in Pasadena and La Mesa and what you are seeing developing.

I am telling people, "As sure as I'm sitting here, you watch. When the next reapportionment takes place, they are going to bring Vuich down to the Kern River in Kern

County." They had her take Delano at one time, on the time before that I was telling you about. She had Delano and McFarland. And she had some Kern County. And then she had Kings County. I'm sure they'll bring her down to something like the Kern River, where she is going to be taking in Wasco, Shafter, Delano, McFarland, Oildale, which is north Bakersfield. All that, not everything.

And where is the southern line of the 16th Senate District going to go? It's going down to the City of South Pasadena. It will keep going down that way because the population is heavier there than up here. And when that happens, you are going to see somebody in Pasadena run for the state senate for the 16th district, and little Kern County is going to be on the outside looking in, with no resident state senator for the first time in its history. And I said, "You watch. That's what's going to happen as a result of this. It's not designed to help me."

In the first place, blacks and browns are not necessarily the people who turn out in great volume at the polls. On numbers of people, to satisfy the one man, one vote thing, you can do that. And you can say that was designed for Walt Stiern to make it tougher for Gutcher, if

you want.

But it's a move that has to be made south. It's part of that extra clout (over twenty-two in the senate) because more people are south of the Tehachapis than are up in the north. So what I think is the true story, and what some of my opponents like to say was why he did it, are two different things. I have to admit it. It's very strange to have the Rose Bowl in my district. And it's awfully odd to have a lot of the electronics industries and things in my district that don't match into this district at all. But my district goes down to across the street from the Pasadena community college. And, of course, the Pasadena community college thought it was great because "here is a guy that beats the drum for community colleges. We love this. We never saw Russell doing that for us."

And it pulled Newt Russell around in such a way that he had to give up some of his territory. And he wanted to get out of there. He didn't want to go in there. The black people and the brown people in Pasadena and Altadena have told me many times, "We seldom saw Newt Russell. He stayed where his Republican strength was, and we didn't get to talk to him or see him." They said during the campaign, "We've seen you more during the campaign than we

have the senator we have had for eight years."

DOUGLASS: So you pulled well, probably, out of there.

STIERN: You know, they were saying, "Praise God. At least we have somebody who will listen to our problems." They were saying that kind of thing. And that irritated him.

DOUGLASS: Do you think there was any thought at all, in constructing that district, to looking to the time when you might not be running and somebody else would have to run who didn't have your success history? Could that have been in it, looking to the eighties? Because didn't you announce around '82 that you probably wouldn't be running again?

STIERN: Yes. I think there is a time when you give this up. I think it is strange to stay in office to where you are senile and you have used up most of all your ideas. And that younger people don't get in place to be developed. That's the way the whole thing works.

DOUGLASS: But do you think they were looking beyond you, in other words, when they devised that district, at all? Or was it just a pragmatic thing you were talking about?

STIERN: The Democrats having their part of the situation?

DOUGLASS: In other words, somebody else might do better

with that kind of support of Altadena and Pasadena. Do you think that was in it?

STIERN: No. I don't. I really think the next move is they toss Kings County off and give it to somebody from Fresno territory, they shear off that desert and give that back to the development that is taking place in there. And they will probably keep coming farther. They have to go farther south.

1986 Election

DOUGLASS: Let's talk about the '86 election, when you are not there to run. How did [James] Jim Young happen to be chosen to run? In your place, in a sense.

STIERN: Well, it's something very much against my grain. Roberti got worried. Roberti was having trouble finding somebody to run for the seat for the state senate out of Kern County.

There was a man who wanted to run whose name is George Ablin. George Ablin is a neurosurgeon in Bakersfield and very active in Democratic politics. A-B-L-I-N, George E. Ablin. And his wife did not want him to run. He is a very, very successful man in a number of areas. Not only is he an outstanding neurosurgeon. He shouldn't be in Bakersfield. He should be in San Francisco, L. A., and more populous places than this. But he is

outstanding. You know, he was president of the neurosurgeons of California, and he has been vice president of the neurosurgeons of the United States. In his field, he is outstanding. On top of that, he is, I think, a political wizard. He is involved in banking and fiscal institutions and has done very well at it. And he works in Democrat politics at the lowest of levels. And he thought he wanted to become the state senator.

And I said to him, "George, I can't believe a man with your special training, ability, and equipment, and knowledge and things would want to give that up and go to the state senate at age sixty-one," which he is. I said, "I can't imagine it." And he said, "Well, that's right, Walter." He is funny. His mind is like that. His mind works and thinks like the humor in The New Yorker magazine. You know, that type of thing. "How was it again?" You take a second look at what he says when his comedy comes out. And he said, "Yes. It reminds me of a man I knew." He says, "I knew a very successful veterinarian that left twenty-two years of veterinary practice and was highly successful, very active in the community, did a very good

job, who went to the senate. He is still up there." [Laughter]

Well, what happened. George had a hard time saying, "Yes, I am going to go for it." Because his wife didn't want him to. And he had a lot of respect for that. In the meantime, Roberti is going crazy. And somebody tells him about a chancellor of the community colleges here. And I had a talk with him, and Young came and talked to me. And I told him everything I could about the job. The advantages and the disadvantages. The fun part, the bad part. The stress on the family and all the things that did. The last time I saw him, he said, "I am not going to do it. I have set it aside, and I'm not going to do it."

DOUGLASS: Now he was chancellor of the whole system, is that right? Of the community colleges?

STIERN: Yes. That included Bakersfield College, Porterville College (which is in Tulare County), Cerro Coso College (which is in Ridgecrest on the desert out by Michelson's laboratory out by Ridgecrest), and it included the Bakersfield Downtown Center and Delano Downtown Center.

DOUGLASS: He was chairman of a regional group of community colleges. [Chancellor of the Kern Community College District]

STIERN: That's right. It's a large group. And then Roberti comes down here, dangling closse to a half a million dollars in front of his face, and says there is more if he'll do it. And he does a turnabout and decides he is going to go for it. And so he goes for it.

My problem--I know both of these men very, very well, they are both extremely good friends--I don't think that you should interfere with a political primary. I don't think that incumbent senators, as a bloc in Sacramento, should dig up money from lobbyists and out of their own war chests and everybody else's and say, "Here, Jim Young. Here is the money. And Ablin, you are not going to get a dime." Because he filed close to the deadline, they just cut him off without even a gift. And I think that's wrong.

And so Young is doing a lot of things that he never did. He never held public office before. And I think it is very hard for a chancellor, because he said his board said if he lost, they would take him back. But I think he is blighted. He will never be the same again. His entire board of Bakersfield College, which is called the Kern County [Community] College District, is straight, solid Republican, every one of them. He runs as a Democrat. I don't

think you can put humpty-dumpty together. If you are a school superintendent or a college president, you cannot get into those kind of things. You know what I am talking about.

DOUGLASS: Yes.

STIERN: I think he hurt himself badly. Some people want him to try again next time around. But they were both good men. They would have both been oriented differently. Roberti should not have done that, sticking his nose into the district, picking the person for them, like Willie Brown likes to do with his money when he runs around and puts money into districts on assembly things. And I don't know how you can spend that much money, almost a million dollars on a district race for state senator and not at least have the aura of being obligated to Roberti. And that came out very clear. And Rogers kept reminding people of that. "Here we are again. We've got another guy like Willie Brown telling us in Kern County who we are going to have and who we are not going to have in Sacramento." And this made it easy for him. [Laughter]

But I wanted to tell you that story because, some way or another, I think that if there aren't some drastic population changes, I see the population in the southern part of the

state, being the larger and growing all the time, is going to demand the respect of more local representation. And the representation could come from south of the Tehachapis to represent this area, and that is going to be a blow for Kern County that is hard to swallow.

DOUGLASS: And if the district stays the same, it sounds as though Rogers has a pretty good chance of staying in a while? Do you think?

STIERN: He'll never win the Los Angeles part of the district. There are blocs that will never vote for him, Mexican-Americans will never vote for him. He is too severe.

DOUGLASS: But he carried 57 percent of Kern County. That's what did it for him.

STIERN: He lost Kings County.

DOUGLASS: And he lost San Bernardino and L. A. [Counties].

STIERN: Yes. He wasn't known in San Bernardino. I thought it would be a closer range because, although he was well known in Tulare County, Tulare is not part of the senate district. And he wasn't known in Kings at all. And he didn't take Kings. He just wasn't known in the east part of this county and had a hard time out there. Whereas Young had Cerro Coso College and all that supportiveness out there.

DOUGLASS: Well, it was 52 percent to 48 [percent]. That isn't real tight, but it is fairly tight, 52-48.

STIERN: Yes. It's fairly close. But when you look at the registration, it should have been different. There is a black woman in Pasadena. I don't know whether you know her or are acquainted with her. Do you know Loretta Glickman?

DOUGLASS: Oh, yes. She is on the city board of Pasadena.

STIERN: Did you ever meet her or know her or been acquainted with her?

DOUGLASS: Yes, just casually.

STIERN: You know, I think if you came up with a. . . . She happens to be a black woman and that makes things different when you get into a county like Kern. But if you could find a person of that popularity in the Pasadena area, running from that side of the mountains, she would give somebody up here something to think about. Especially if the percentage weight of the district were in the south end of the district because on the one man, one vote, you had to go farther south.

And when you do that, if you've got a person of her capabilities, popularity, knowhow, she has got some political base, she would run a person more ragged than my earlier opponent did. She would be tougher, I think. The black-white thing is involved there.

XX. FINAL SENATE TERM (1982-1986)

DOUGLASS: It will be fascinating to watch your prediction on this. Let me ask you a couple of things here. We are sort of getting toward the end. I think you commented that when you ran in '82, you wanted to run this one last time because there were a few things you wanted to still do. What were the things you had on your mind? And by the time you went out in '86, had you gotten some of those things accomplished?

Bakersfield State College

STIERN: Well, one thing I wanted to do very much and had to be in a protective role was that Cal State College, Bakersfield got its fair share of what each California State College and University campus was entitled to. And there was indications that that was not happening.

You know, the board of trustees of the state college system make their laundry list of what their needs are. And things that other campuses had, this one did not have yet.

DOUGLASS: And as you said, there was just sort of an automatic cutoff.

STIERN: Yes. That's right. So when I started working in Subcommittee 1 (Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), giving that system automatically aquatic facilities on every one of

their campuses, but it doesn't exist at Bakersfield yet, I am saying, "Where is Bakersfield's?" And then when they say that a library should be not less than a certain number of volumes and quality, I am saying, "Okay. Where is Bakersfield? They are part of this thing. And just because they are little and remote and small and some place else and don't satisfy the definition of a university, I don't think they should be so abused." And I have gone out of my way to get things for Sonoma and Stanislaus and San Bernardino.

And in the community college world, I went out of my way to get things at Tahoe Lake and Mendocino and things, so they would enjoy what other community colleges have. And I could see some loose strings that had to be tied together. And I wanted to be able to be sitting there when decisions were made on that budget. [Laughter] And be chairman of that subcommittee.

A men's gymnasium, that was another example. They don't have a men's gymnasium here, not on this campus. Every one of the campuses has a men's gymnasium. Now gymnasiums don't have high priority. When you sit in an academic world, you can see lots of things that you need before you need a gymnasium. But this is such a highly activated athletic area. It is

very, very big here. I don't know if you and your husband follow athletics.

DOUGLASS: We follow it.

STIERN: All right. Then you will remember this. And this is unbelievable. In its third year, Cal State Bakersfield, no men's gymnasium at all on the campus, none, they took their basketball team out to Lakeview Elementary . . .

[End Tape 8, Side B]

[Begin Tape 9, Side A]

STIERN: Lakeview School is one of those school districts that has hundreds of thousands of dollars behind their students because they have all these oil wells in their backyard. They also have farming. And so you haul the team from Cal State College, Bakersfield, there every day to practice because they have so much money and so much wealth, they have a gymnasium that won't end. You can't believe an elementary gymnasium that looks like it. That's one of the problems with these wealthy districts. They can do that.

So Bakersfield's team goes out there from the Cal State campus and develops themselves. And what did they do, with this community support and everything else the next year? They beat every school in the California State University system, including San Diego with

30,000 students, including San Francisco with 26,000 students, including Los Angeles State University (they have got about 27,000 students), and up and down the board. Fresno, the whole caboodle. All of them. This team was the winning team.

Now a community that is slanted like that in athletics, that can do that, and you know something about the past. And the past is that there was a time in the history of athletics where, between 1920 and 1932, in twelve years, Bakersfield High School was the state champion football team of the state nine times out of twelve. And in the three other times, were in the final game. It's an athletically oriented place. All I am saying is that they are entitled to what others have. If you say, "These are the basic things that every campus is going to get." All right. We want them. And I could see myself, with a new senator going up there, he's not going to have my subcommittee. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: So beyond these facilities for the state college, what other things did you want to do?

Community Colleges

STIERN: I wanted to do more for community colleges. I wanted to be able fight on that tuition thing. I was dead set against raising that tuition in

community colleges. I think that was really a serious, serious mistake on the part of Governor Deukmejian and the legislature going along with that. I would like to see some other things done in the way that the grants and scholarships are handled and more. . . . I wanted to see this review at the end of twenty-five years of the Master Plan. Is it on track? Are there major changes needed? Where there are, "go get them fellows" and do that. If it is not, leave it alone. "If it ain't broke, don't touch it," as they say. And walk away from it and say, "Well, things are in younger hands. I wish you well." And that's it.

DOUGLASS: So your interests were educational really, weren't they?

STIERN: They were really basically education. And, of course, Ann Gutcher was apt to say, "Well, he is going to be a lame-duck legislator up there. Even if he does get up there, he is not going to be able to do anything important after that." I mean it was a good talking point from her standpoint. And "we need somebody younger to build on. He has been up there long enough." There were just enough people who said, "No, Ann. We're willing to let him do that, and that's it." And when the time came, I kept my

word and said, "I am not going to run again. I'm through."

DOUGLASS: When you went out of office last year, what was there still hanging fire that you wished you had been able to tie together?

STIERN: Well, I know that education has an unsatisfiable thirst for money, like a sponge drawing up water. You can use it anywhere. One of the biggest ones which is the most insidious is deferred maintenance. And I fear that because it's the hardest thing in the world to get people in the state of California to believe that they own every school building in this state that's a public school building, from pre-kindergarten through graduate level. But they do. And it gets pushed aside and pushed aside and pushed for other things. And that's a dangerous thing, to keep that up.

But I realize that at the age I am and the time I served and newer people and newer ideas coming on, it was time for me to move aside and let newer ideas come into the thing. But there is the danger.

Rules Committee

DOUGLASS: One question I am curious about. And that is why were you never assigned to the Rules Committee?

STIERN: I could never have made it. If I had been put

on the Rules Committee. . . . That's what Ann Gutcher used to ask people. And I said, "If I were put on the Rules Committee, if I had become a candidate, and tried to ever be on the Rules Committee, I would not have been there two weeks. Because I would not put up with a lot of nonsense, that I think is nonsense, that goes on to what the Rules Committee does. I cannot cater to a bunch of people just to have them put me on the Rules Committee." I think there is a way to operate the senate. I think the Rules Committee is the people who have to bite the bullet and do it, financially. And how they operate the thing. And to do what I would do, you know, there would be somebody challenging me just like that. I would be out of there and off there before I even knew what hit me.

DOUGLASS: So it wouldn't be a position you would want to be put in? Is that right?

STIERN: I would have loved to have served on the Rules Committee. But I always knew I never could. I knew that what I believe in, what I think of, how I think the senate should be. . . . There was enough of the Hugh Burns' type thing in me that I would never have prevailed.

DOUGLASS: So are you saying that you wouldn't do the things that were necessary to do to even get

appointed to it, number one?

STIERN: Exactly.

DOUGLASS: And, number two, if you did get appointed to it, you wouldn't have lasted because you would not have gone along with . . .

STIERN: The younger men would not have put up with that kind of thing. I saw that very vividly. It became very obvious to me when we had the exodus of assemblymen come to the senate. They decided that sergeants-at-arms were not really sergeants-at-arms. They were nursemaids for the members. "Go out and get me a package of cigarettes." "Take my laundry to the laundry. Take my clothes to the laundry that should be taken care of." "Shine my shoes," and all this kind of thing. The demeaning things that they would ask their sergeants-of-arms to do over there, compared to the way we operated our sergeants at arms in the senate.

Then once when they got to our side, you know, they couldn't have their way. And they would get together and say--you can't be in the senate chamber without a coat on, that's not true in the assembly, there is a certain dress decor there--so they would just say, "Well, if that's the case, then I am going to do this or that and the other thing. And I won't do this for the sergeant-at-arms. I will defy him."

And they had all kinds of things, I think, where you saw us being assemblyized, like the assembly. And to ask for personal favors, to have people do what they should do [for you] as a state senator is not in my bag. I just can't do that.

DOUGLASS: Do you think there should be a Rules Committee?

STIERN: Yes. There should. I think it is too much power to put in the hands of one person. The counterpart is the speakership in the assembly. And all the speakers have recognized the power that they have, when they have that. I have never known a one of them, regardless of whether he was Democrat or Republican who didn't use his power, and they all go marching off the cliff, just the way he wants. Nobody stands up and says, "If we are going to change this, it is going to be the will of this house. Not the will of the speaker."

DOUGLASS: So you recognize that as a phenomenon, it needs to exist, but it is something that really . . .

STIERN: I would like to see them have something like we have. Why don't they have a little corps of people of both parties, like we have. If we can do it with forty, they certainly should be doing it with eighty.

DOUGLASS: No. But what I meant it is. . . . In the

senate, though, you are saying there is a need for some kind of locus of power and the Rules Committee might as well be it, as contrasted to the assembly, where there is the speaker.

STIERN: Yes. That's right.

DOUGLASS: So you wouldn't want to do away with the Rules Committee?

STIERN: Oh, no. It has a broader base. And it has to do with bill assignments. It has to do with where office assignments are. What you are allowed in your district. What you can or can't do with a newsletter, how much money there is in there, how much politicizing is allowed in that, and what is not. You are not allowed to politicize in the newsletters. And all that kind of thing. The Rules Committee reviews everybody that the governor wants to appoint which requires senate confirmation. And you have some control over what kind of people get in as the heads of commissions and committees and judgeships and departments heads. And all that kind of thing. It's an interesting spot to be in.

DOUGLASS: But it's not really your style?

STIERN: I wouldn't have lasted two weeks. I know that.

DOUGLASS: That's interesting. There was a comment, I think it was probably again out of the California Journal, in 1981, that you

seemed to be "becoming increasingly frustrated with a senate that has changed almost completely around" you.[1] Was that the feeling you were beginning to get by the early eighties?

STIERN: Well, you look around, and you become very much aware that there is nobody in the room that has been there as long as you have. You have been there longer than anybody. And people have left the senate for various reasons. Deaths, appointments to judgeships, they are going to their businesses, wherever they may be. And, one by one, those people were disappearing and younger people were coming in.

And it's a strange phenomena, if you talk to a young person about what had happened. Like if you were to talk about the Master Plan [for Higher Education], why it came into being, what some of its basic elements are. If you are talking to a new senator that has only been there a month or six months or a year, he is going to say, "What's this guy trying to do? Take me down the primrose path to do something he wants to do." He is not saying, "I am going to dig into history to see if what he says is true. I'll just ignore him and let it go at that." So sometimes they would believe you.

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1. California Journal (September 1981), p. 317.

Sometimes they would not believe you. Sometimes they would trust you. Sometimes they would not trust you. Sometimes they would do strange things.

And once in a while I would pop of and say something that probably I shouldn't, you know, in a caucus of the whole. I said, "You know, I think it is a strange thing to see members of the legislature arrested for being drunk and disorderly on a highway in a car." I said, "Some people in the legislature can do that and get away with it. If Walter Stiern were to do that, there would be a recall the next morning in his district. I know that. I think people expect more out of us, and we should have more decorum in our private life. And people like to point to people in the legislature to their children with respect. And I think this is all part of having a democratic, legislative operation in a state like this." Well, you can't say things like that without some people being hurt by it, that are not liking it. They won't agree, and they won't say that they disagree.

Ethics in the Senate and Nationally

DOUGLASS: Do you think there has been a change in the sense of ethics in the senate?

STIERN: Oh, yes. It has changed all over the United

States, every state in the union. It's at national and state level and county and city level. I think it's our whole strata. I suffer from this. I feel badly about this. I often say to myself, "Where are the ethics of this country in what we do and how we do it."

DOUGLASS: You said you saw it in the senate? I mean that concerned you.

STIERN: I have seen it deteriorate in the senate, I think. I don't think the senate today is anywhere what the senate was when I went into it. There was a lot more of that decorum there. And even if it were something as simple as you can see a fight starting on the floor, you can sense it. You know there is a problem. In the early days of my career, the whole senate would be adjourned temporarily to the lounge and we would talk it out. We wouldn't wash our dirty linen in public and look like a bunch of silly nincompoops, for whatever reason that we were. And then people had to have some respect for the decor in which it operated.

Today, you go into a Democratic caucus and a Republican caucus, and you come out and tell everybody everything under the sun, degrade, deride, and look like a bunch of fools to the gallery. I would expect more from that room.

You know one of the mottos of the state. I guess "Eureka" is one of them, "I found it." But there is another one that has real meaning to me. It did before I got there, and I would have liked to see it stand. It is: "Give me men to match my mountains."

DOUGLASS: Yes. That's one I was thinking of.

STIERN: And when I went in there, I looked at all these people in there when I got there. And the time they had served and what they had done and how they had tried to work it out. They had gone through the war years, many times without very much financially to do with, and gave great amounts of their time. And I just think that we can find better for our elected positions. There are better men and women in California to be state senators than any one of the forty of us sitting there. Nobody goes out to try to find them and get them. There are better men and women than some of the people who have offered themselves to be governor, and they don't present themselves.

But what is atrocious and what is worse is that there is no participation in a country that is founded on the basic rights of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, the right to vote, and that kind of thing. And you get a 15 percent turnout in

San Francisco County in a congressional race. That is, to me, incredible, just incredible. And when you look at it for the governorship of California. Look at it for the presidency of the United States. Reagan doesn't have the majority vote of the people of the United States. He has the majority of those who took the time to turn out and vote only, that were registered.

I think we are headed for something that is going to be very different out there in the years ahead if we don't get this straightened out, because our children are bound to be affected by this.

Question of Full-Time Legislature

DOUGLASS: Do you think the promise of a full-time legislature has fulfilled itself? In other words, theoretically, we could go back to a part-time legislature . . .

STIERN: I think in a state like New York and California and Pennsylvania and states of that size, you need a full-time legislature.

DOUGLASS: But would you attract better people, do you think?

STIERN: No. I don't think so. And I don't think you do it with money. Although I think that, contrary to common belief, I think legislatures in the

United States are badly, badly underpaid. Some of them are atrocious. You ought to see them for Wyoming and Idaho. Thirty days a year paid per diem for days in session. The intricacies of pollution control and air control and water control and sound control and aviation and electronics and the world of space and everything else that we are into is such that you don't have time unless you have a session to do it in. You can't do it for free. And, of course, to a man who makes $10,000, $12,000 a year, a salary of $24,000 probably looks like a lot of money. But most people sitting in the state senate are working for less than a third of what they work for as a person not in the senate.

DOUGLASS: Do you think there has been a problem in the senate in having staff people ending up running for election?

STIERN: I think that staff people can take advantage and they can beguile and guide certain people into what they think is right and wrong and be convincing to members. And that the input coming from staffers in a full-time senate are much more influential than a part-time staff.

DOUGLASS: Yes. I am interested in that. But I am also interested. . . . It's true in the assembly, maybe not so much in the senate, but there has

been the criticism that many staff people end up running for office, and they have never really done anything more than be a staff person in the legislature. Do you think that is a problem?

STIERN: Well, there are people like that. George Moscone was like that. He was a staff person for the senator from San Francisco County. Bill Greene was a staffer. He was on the desk in the assembly and now he is in the senate.

DOUGLASS: Well, the comment has been made that they don't really know what it is like to come out of a community and go to the legislature and represent them.

STIERN: That's right.

DOUGLASS: Do you think that's a problem?

STIERN: Yes. It is a problem. And the other thing is you don't feel a part of that community. People don't go home. And you have complaints that "we never see our state senator. He's got a home up in Sacramento, and he never comes down here." And what's odd is, in some of the worst cases, which I'm not going quote the name in this case, in the worst cases are where the person is most secure.

These two people I have in mind have learned that by not going home to be visible, "my people think I am up there up working my

tail off up there just constantly for them, and my opponent every year says, 'he never comes to see us, he never comes to talk to us, never comes to a commencement, never comes to any kind of community thing or a dedication, or nothing. He just sits up there in Sacramento and never does that. Who needs a guy like that?'" But the other people all think, "Boy, he's working up there. He doesn't have time to come home. He is working on this and doing all this."

DOUGLASS: That is an interesting change, though, from the period when you came into the legislature, isn't it?

STIERN: Yes, it is.

DOUGLASS: That people can actually, in relative isolation, just know that world of Sacramento.

STIERN: Exactly.

DOUGLASS: And not really know communities. That is a little spooky, isn't it?

STIERN: Yes, it is. And I'll tell you something else that's spooky. Before these houses were built across the street here [across from Senator Stiern's home], there was a man that had a house, that lived over on the next street. [Laughter] It's called Inyo Street. This is Skyline Boulevard. And I can never forget a letter that I got from this man.

Now he could yell at me. He could walk

over here. Okay. We have a Halloween party in this neighborhood that we put on every year in this backyard, and every family within a block and a half is in this backyard. It's pot luck. We have done this ever since our girls were three and five. They are grown. They are almost forty now. We are still doing it. We think it is a good thing to tie the neighborhood together. But this man who is sitting over there on that block writes letters to: Senator Stiern, Washington, D. C. The letter goes back there. No such person. Try something else. Try this, try that. Eventually there is something stamped on the envelope, Try California. It comes to the post office in Sacramento, and I get his letter two months later on some issue. He doesn't even know that the state senator is a half a block from him.

DOUGLASS: That's kind of frightening.

STIERN: He apparently doesn't vote. Those are what's scary to me. The lack of concern. That there is just no interest in it. Another thing is registering people who are never going to vote. They'll register just to get rid of you, and they are not going to vote. That attitude is hard to understand, but is prevalent amongst new

citizens. It is common amongst Mexican-Americans.

Recognition by Sacramento Union

DOUGLASS: Let's end on a really nice note, I think. Because, as you know, you were named one of "the eight most respected legislators in Sacramento" in 1985 by a survey of the Sacramento Union paper. And it was a survey of legislators, staff aides, and administrative officials, and reporters. And of the senate, it was you and Presley, and [Edward] Davis.

STIERN: I have to admit that made me feel very good that I was able to be in that eight.

DOUGLASS: Now comment on Presley and Davis.

STIERN: I looked at that list very hard when I looked at it, because only three of them were out of the senate. And I looked at the ones particularly in the assembly. Those people in the assembly, I would have voted for them, too. Because in working with that house, those people are very, very straight, and good people to work with. Ayala.

DOUGLASS: Ayala isn't on the list I have. It's [Lloyd] Connelly, [Robert] Naylor, [Alister] McAlister, [Thomas] Hannigan, and [William R.] Leonard.

STIERN: What have you got in the senate?

DOUGLASS: I've got Presley and Davis and Stiern.

STIERN: Okay. I think they should have added Ruben

Ayala on that list. I really do. But these are people that, if they tell you something, they will do it. If you ask them if they would consider this, they will do it. They are not pushed around. "If you throw us off our chairmanships of committee, Mr. Pro Tem, go ahead and do it. But I'm not going to do certain things. There are certain things I will not do." Presley is that kind of man. And where did Presley come from? Presley was the undersheriff of Riverside County. He came from the state of Oklahoma before that. He's got an Oklahoma drawl, but he is a tremendously effective legislator.

Davis came to me as a surprise. I had heard all these strange stories about the chief of police of Los Angeles and what an ogre he was and everything else. And I found this was not true at all, particularly in things in education and dealing with children and underprivileged people. People with health problems and needing help and all that kind of thing. There is a very compassionate, human side to him that a lot of people never see or fail to see, for some reason. But when I saw that, my reaction was "Well, Walt, you are in good company." I was proud to be in that group.

DOUGLASS: That was a real tribute to you.

STIERN: It was a nice feeling. And, especially, when you get down to all the employees of the legislature in both houses, the people that have to do the nitty-gritty every day, from the guy in the mailroom to the guy who parks the cars in the basement, to the girls who run the elevators, to the people that do the significant work in Revenue and Taxation and staff and women in other people's offices. That's a lot of people. Yes. It was a nice feeling to leave the legislature, knowing how your compatriots felt about you. [Laughter]

DOUGLASS: A real vote of confidence. Well, I want to thank you. We could go on, obviously, forever almost. You have been marvelously forthcoming. I really appreciate that and the fact that you've given all this time to this exercise.

STIERN: Well, if you want to do more. If something comes up in the future that we want to work with or that I can elaborate on or things we have forgotten about, you know, we can do it any time you want to. It's not hard to do. We can come down there just as easily as you can come up here.

[End Tape 8, Side A]

[End of Session 2]

NAMES IN WALTER W. STIERN INTERVIEW

Name	Page
Ablin, George E.	442-444, 445
Alquist, Alfred E.	270, 271, 435
Anderson, Glenn M.	120, 368-369
Ayala, Ruben	393, 467-468
Bagley, William T.	375-376
Bee, Carlos	179, 180
Behr, Peter H.	338. 355-358. 403
Beilenson, Anthony C.	89, 228
Belotti, Frank P.	142
Bergeson, Marian R.	416
Berman, Howard L.	90, 226
Berry, Swift	237
Boatwright, Daniel E.	431
Borton, Judge Richard	251
Bose, Stella	45
Bradley, Clark L.	267
Bradley, Thomas	263, 300
Brown, Charles	82
Brown, Edmund G. "Pat"	61, 62, 65, 70-80, 83, 91, 112, 124, 133, 146, 148, 152, 153, 155, 156-163, 167, 168, 169-171, 251, 279, 284, 285
Brown, Edmund G. "Jerry," Jr.	155, 158-159, 161, 163, 309-315, 404, 405, 423
Brown, Ralph M.	117, 230
Brown, Willie L., Jr.	90, 230, 378-384, 429
Burgener, Clair W.	89, 226
Burns, Hugh	61, 65, 68, 71-80, 83, 91, 133, 146, 228, 234, 272, 334, 335, 339, 340-342, 343, 345, 346, 347, 348, 455
Byrne, Paul L.	93
Cameron, Ronald G.	53
Campbell, William	260, 301-304, 306
Carpenter, Dennis E.	260, 386, 407
Carpenter, Paul B.	208, 262-263
Carrell, Tom	266, 267
Casey, Jack T.	123, 124
Chacon, Peter R.	377
Champion, Hale	162
Chavez, Cesar	195, 258-259
Chiang Kai-shek	37
Chessman, Caryl	123, 139, 160
Cleaver, Eldridge	250, 258

Cobey, James A. 68, 83, 240
Collier, Randolph 73, 74, 330, 334, 351-354, 356, 386, 390
Colonel Merrill's Marauders 34
Connelly, Lloyd 468
Coombs, Nathan F. 96
Coombs, William E. 258
Coons, Arthur G. 119
Cullner, Willis 246
Cunningham, R. R. 236
Cunningham, William 278-279
Curb, Mike 254, 372-373

Danielson, George E. 89
Danneymeyer, William E. 226
Davis, Angela 250, 258
Davis, Edward 468
Davis, Pauline L. 129
Desmond, Earl D. 53
Deukmejian, C. George 93, 155, 162, 264-265, 280, 281, 295-308, 375, 386, 400
Dills, Ralph C. 288
Dilworth, Nelson S. 96
Dolwig, Richard J. 120, 272, 274, 276, 329
Donahoe, Dorothy M. 113-116, 123, 124, 125-128, 129-130, 176, 238
Donnelly, Hugh P. 117, 208
Doolittle, John 431
Dorsey, Jess R. 57, 58, 59
Dunlap, John F. 208
Dymally, Mervyn M. 85-88, 370-372, 374-375, 430

Erhart, John S. 60

Farr, Fred S. 106, 108, 133-134, 138, 215-216
Finch, Robert H. 86
Fisher, Hugo 53, 83, 134, 163, 164-169, 215
Flournoy, Houston I. 404-405
Foley, Philip 246, 256
Fowler, Dorothy 236-237, 242-244, 245, 246

Gann, Paul 423-425
Gibson, Luther E. 328
Gill, Barney 57
Gonzales, Raymond J. 140-141
Greene, Bill 425
Grunsky, Donald L. 53, 106, 108, 127, 208-209, 211, 215, 227, 339, 386
Gutcher, Mary Ann 259-261, 263, 264, 453

Hannigan, Thomas 468
Harmer, John L. 86, 86, 370-372, 386, 431
Hart, Gary 208
Hollister, John J., Jr. 120
Holmdahl, John W. 53

Jackson, LeRoy M. 399-400
Jarvis, Howard 424-425
Johnson, Harold T. "Bizz" 131, 132
Jordan, Frank 62

Ketchum, William M. 319
Kennick, Joseph M. 329, 384
Kerr, Clark 358, 360
Knight, Goodwin J. 56, 155, 170
Knowland, William F. 56
Koerber, Bernice Harrell Chapman Fritts 257

LeMay, General Liston 31
Leonard, William R. 467
Lincoln, Luther H. 230
Lagomarsino, Robert J. 70, 329, 330, 331, 334, 433

Maddy, Kenneth L. 260-261
Marler, Fred W., Jr. 384
McAlister, Alister 467
McAteer, Eugene 53, 333-334, 337
McCarthy, John F. 329, 331
McCarthy, Leo T. 90, 373-375
McLean, Gloria 237-242, 244, 245, 246
Mello, Henry J. 435
Miller, George, Jr. 120, 125, 127, 207, 210-212, 216, 231-232, 411
Mills, James R. 77, 292, 343, 348-351, 406, 426
Monagan, Robert T. 230
Montgomery, Robert I. 146
Moretti, Robert 230
Morgan, Rebecca Q. 415
Moscone, George R. 297, 386, 464
Murdy, John A., Jr. 62, 146, 152, 155, 329

Naylor, Robert 468
Nielsen, James W. 284

O'Sullivan, Virgil 52

Park, Bill 247, 252, 253, 257
Petris, Nicholas C. 235
Powers, Harold J. "Butch" 72
Presley, Robert 393, 468
Pundt, Werner 28

Rattigan, Joseph A. 53
Read, Ben F. 98
Reagan, Nancy 281
Reagan, Ronald 76, 155, 163, 248, 254, 257, 265-279, 280-287, 297, 306, 307, 308, 358-360, 389, 400, 403
Regan, Edwin J. 138
Reinecke, Ed 369-370
Richards, Richard 66, 82
Richardson, H. L. 373, 395, 431
Roberti, David A. 78, 343, 349, 426-430, 435, 442, 445
Rodda, Albert S. 53, 106, 108, 164, 165-166, 168, 189-190, 208, 215, 347, 386
Rogers, Donald 256, 418, 446
Russell, Newton 436-437, 440

Sage, Jerry 25
Schrade, Jack 77. 169. 258, 332, 342-348
Scott, Joe 224
Shaw, Stanford C. 52
Short, Alan 146, 329, 332, 334
Slattery, Waverly Jack 53, 61
Snyder, W. R. 418
Stillwell, Lillian 236, 240
Sutton, Louis G. 73

Teale, Stephen P. 64, 238, 329, 333, 386
Thomas, William M. 261
Thompson, John F. 85
Townsend, L. E. 250

Unruh, Jesse M. 91, 216, 218, 227, 228, 229-230, 231-233

Vuich, Rose Ann 393, 408-413, 425, 434

Walker, William S. 57, 237
Waterhouse, Phil 246, 252, 254
Watson, Diane E. 108, 410, 412-416, 425
Waxman, Henry A. 226, 228
Way, Howard 77, 339-342, 343, 344, 347
Whetmore, James E. 384
Williams, J. Howard 66, 83, 146
Williams, Robert D. 52
Williamson, John C. 54, 115, 123, 124, 176, 238, 259
Wilson, Bob 349
Wyman, Philip 418

Young, James 442, 444-447

Zenovich, George 406-407, 409

Sacramento Bee 2/23/88

Walter Stiern, ex-dean of state Senate, dies

Bee Capitol Bureau

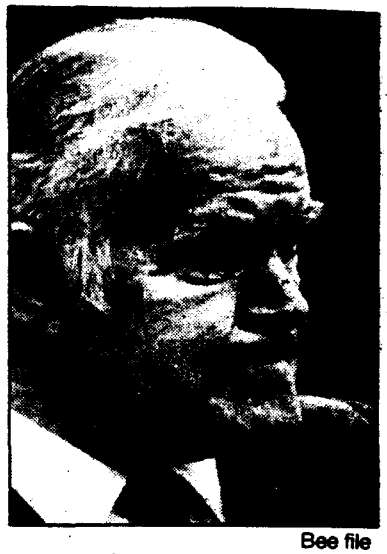
Walter W. Stiern, who was dean of the state Senate when he retired in 1986, died Sunday evening while taking a nap at a friend's home in Davis.

The Bakersfield Democrat was 73.

During his 28 years in the Senate, Mr. Stiern was known for his civility, lack of partisanship and tireless advocacy for education, health and agricultural issues. He also chaired some of the Senate's top finance and policy committees.

Gov. Deukmejian, who spent 12 years in the upper house with Mr. Stiern, said Monday he had great respect for the veteran lawmaker.

"Walter Stiern will be remembered as a compassionate, caring and dedicated legislator," the governor said.



Bee file

Walter Stiern was a champion of education, health and agricultural issues.

Senate President Pro Tem David Roberti, D-Los Angeles, praised Mr. Stiern for a "complete, honest and reverent dedication to the institution of the Senate."

Before entering politics, Mr. Stiern spent 20 years as a veterinarian in Bakersfield, specializing in large animals and health issues associated with milk production.

Mr. Stiern said later, however, that his interest in health and education really took root while serving in the U.S. Army during World War II.

"A thread that goes through my being is my exposure of living in ease and ignorance," he told a reporter in 1986. "I came back with the feeling that I didn't want my state and country to get to that."

He sponsored numerous measures to help people from modest means who wanted to improve themselves. When asked two years ago about his greatest legislative accomplishments, he mentioned efforts to expand the community college system and establish a state college in Bakersfield.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Mr. Stiern never took an overseas junket. Some officeholders attempt to reap political advantage by attaching their names to important pieces of legislation. But Mr. Stiern refused to allow any law to carry his name.

During his later Senate years, he also expressed discomfort with a trend toward partisanship and the use of coarse language.

"People didn't air dirty linen in public" in earlier years, he said in a 1985 interview. "They went into India and seeing poverty and disan office, closed the door and worked things out. I hate to see the profanity because of the students or the people visiting here for the first time. This speaks poorly of us."

Mr. Stiern suffered a mild heart attack in 1976, but had been in fairly good health in recent years. Sunday, he and his wife, Alysjune, drove from Bakersfield to a friend's home in Davis. They had planned to relax there until Wednesday when the senator was scheduled for eye surgery.

A spokesman for the Yolo County coroner's office said Mr. Stiern's wife found him dead about 6:20 p.m. Sunday when she attempted to awaken him from a nap. An autopsy is scheduled.

Mr. Stiern's district was in the southern San Joaquin Valley. But as boundaries were changed at various times, he also represented portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Inyo counties.

He was born in San Diego in 1914, the son of a high school teacher. In 1938, he received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from Washington State College.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two daughters and five grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were pending Monday. The Senate also plans a memorial service.

AREA

Veteran state lawmaker Walter Stiern dies at 73

Walter Stiern, former dean of the California Senate who served in the upper house for 28 years, has died at the age of 73, the Yolo County coroner's office reported.

Officials said Stiern, of Bakersfield, died in his sleep Sunday in Davis.

Stiern, a conservative Democrat, represented Kern and Kings counties and small portions of San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties before retiring in 1986.

— from staff and news service reports

Senator Walter W. Stiern
ARCHIVAL TAPES

REEL 1	Session, May 27, 1987 [pp. 1-88]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #1, Side A
		Cassette #1, Side B (beg., to p. 44, end paragraph 2)
	Side 2:	Cassette #1, Side B (remainder)
		Cassette #2, Side A (beg., to p. 88)
REEL 2	Session 1, continued [pp.88-181]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #2, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #2, Side B
		Cassette #3, Side A (beg., to p. 135, last line)
	Side 2:	Cassette #3, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #3, Side B (beg., to p. 181)
REEL 3	Session 1, continued [pp. 181-271]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #3, Side B (remainder)
		Cassette #4, Side A
		[END OF SESSION 1]
		Cassette #5, Side A (beg., to p. 227)
	Side 2:	Cassette #5, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #5, Side B
		Cassette #6, Side A (beg., to p. 271)
REEL 4	Session 2, continued [pp. 271-357]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #6, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #6, Side B (beg. to p. 313)
	Side 2:	Cassette #6, Side B (remainder)
		Cassette #7, Side A (beg., to p. 357)
REEL 5	Session 2, continued [pp. 357-442]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #7, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #7, Side B
		Cassette #8, Side A (beg., to p. 400)
	Side 2:	Cassette #8, Side A (remainder)
		Cassette #8, Side B (beg., to p. 442)
REEL 6	Session 2, continued [pp. 442-469]	
	Side 1:	Cassette #8, Side B
		Cassette #9, Side A
		[END OF SESSION 2]