HHA # 00262
Interviewee: William Dudley Lastrapes
Interviewer: David DiTucci
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Transcriber: Lauren Penney

[Transcriber's note: The majority of the interviewer's backchanneling has not been transcribed for the purposes of readability.]

Ethnographic preface:

William "Dud" Lastrapes was born in New Orleans, but moved to Opelousas, Louisiana when he was about three weeks old. After graduating from high school there in 1946, he went to Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now ULL) where he completed his degree in 1950. He worked in radio broadcasting for a few months before joining the Air Force in early 1951. When he returned, he went back into radio for six months, before joining Channel 10 (KOFY) TV. In 1970, he left the station and went into banking and later insurance. In 1972 and '78 he was elected to the school board. From 1980 to '92 he served as mayor to Lafayette. From 1990-92 he sat on the MMS board as an appointee of President Bush's. In 1992, he was elected to a two-year term as State Chairman of the Republican Party. Since that time he has done health and life insurance in Lafayette. During his interview, he discusses in-depth the local Republican Party and some of the things he dealt with during the economic down and upturns the community experienced while he was mayor. He particularly describes the local utility system.

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer initials: [DD]

Interviewee initials: [DL]

DL: I was at uh, SLI back then, which later became USL which is now ULL. So as far back as the uh, I guess the '50s when the Oil Center was built through the uh, vision of Mister Heymann and some oil people. And I think that, since that time it's obviously played a major role in our economic uh, life here in Lafayette and Acadiana area and still does to this day. So uh, we've, we've always felt that it's a major asset for this community and the people of this community.

DD: Well I want to start at your beginning. I want to get an idea of your experiences here in Lafayette through the oil industry and through politics here. So what I want to do is go back to when you were born and whence you were from to set up some background information.

DL: Oh. Well, let's see. I grew up in Opelousas which is just 20 miles from here, you know. Uh, m-, however, I was born in New Orleans. My mother was from there and she had a [Inaudible] relationship, so uh, but I, I'm, I, in

Opelousas since uh, you know, 'bout three weeks old. So that's my hometown really and, and went to school there and came to Southwestern right after school. This was right after the war years, I, I, my, my freshman year was in 1946, so we're goin' back a good many years. And uh, completed that degree in 1950. Went into broadcasting at the radio station in Opelousas. In early '51 entered the Air Force because we had the Korean War that was on the way then and served for four years. Came back out, uh, went back to the radio station in Opelousas but that was in early '55, but uh, six months later in June of '55, I joined the group that signed on Channel 10, KOFY TV here in Lafayette. And uh, in 1970 is when I left and I went into banking and then insurance and then City Hall as mayor. Came out of City Hall 10 years ago and uh, I've been back in the, at this time life and health insurance field. Until the present time. Um. The uh, I, I've been in the political aspect of, of life here for some time. Since uh, the early 1970s. Got elected to the school board. Uh, it was a six year term at that time and in '78, I got elected, or reelected, excuse me, to a second term, but served only two years, because two years after that reelection was in 1980 when I got elected mayor of Lafayette. And then I served 12 years, so I've been out of office now 10 years, since 1992. I served 1980 to '92 the mayor's office. And then since uh, no, then I became State Chairman of the Republican Party in '92 for two year term. After which I'm now settled down in, into doing some health and life insurance work in Lafayette. So that kind of brings you up to date.

DD: Okay.

DL: My brief history.

DD: Okay. Well um, before you even became officially involved in politics, how did you first get involved and what was the situ-, political situation in this area like at the time?

DL: Well, I can't, let me go back a little bit. I, I originally got involved, there, there probably a couple reasons. Number one, I liked to follow news. Number two, being in news back in the '50s and '60s, we, we covered local public bodies, we covered the state legislature, you kind of got a feel of it and so you begin to develop a, a feel also for wanting to express yourself and your own views and philosophy. Uh, my broadcast career, in which I spent 16 years in radio and mostly television, uh, doin' news, I have a, I had an uncle, he's deceased now, but uh, he was an inspiration to me, because he was an early pioneer in radio in New Orleans when radio was just not too far from being in its infancy. And uh, so I used to visit him at the old uh, studios in the old Roosevelt Hotel, which is the Fairmont now, and that was WWO, which, which still exists. And those were great days of great radio. And so was quite interesting back then. So anyway, that let me to broadcasting, broadcasting to some extent led me into politics because I had a feel for the news and following the news, and reporting on it. But then also being on the television every night gives you excellent exposure so people will know the name, know the face, and so the uh, the contacts worked our pretty good, you know.

DD: What was, when you first got into broadcasting, what was the political situation like here then?

DL: Oh, back in the, in the '50s?

DD: Yes.

DL: Um. Well, I guess [Chuckles] I don't know, I have to think back over that a, a bit. For one thing, I, I've been a Republican since 1959, so the early years of uh, being in broadcasting were a little bit um [Pause] a little bit strange in a way. Because Republicans were rare at that time. There was pretty much I'd say 90 percent or more Democrat. Now, we, we've got a pretty good mix of, particularly in Lafayette Parish, as you may know. So you had to kind of tread carefully at that time, because uh, it, I think it became known that I had become a Republican, so those 1960s broadcasting years, you had to make sure that you were careful and not to show any kind of favoring one way or the other. So we kind of went down the middle to, to make sure that coverage was fair and everything. But uh, anyway, it was, it was it-, interesting period of time in which the, the new uh, young Republican Party was grappling with a growth problem [Chuckling] as you know. So kind of witnessed that and saw some people who plowed the ground,

ran for office, got beat pretty bad, but, but they sort of paved the way for other candidates who came along later. And, and then it became a little bit easier once two or three here and there got elected. So the political climate while I, I would say, you would, you would've detected a more moderate to conservative Democrat atmosphere than today you have pretty much liberal, conservative, and most of the conservative are Republicans, most liberals are Democrat, although there's a little crossover there to some degree in either side. But it was much more solidly Democrat at that time.

DD: Democrat, yet still conservative or moderate.

DL: Still pretty much in that fashion, that's right. I mean, not as many, not as much of a uh, a liberal slant as you might see in today's time.

DD: Right. Um, when you first got, when you first joined the Republican Party, can you tell me more about that? Why did you join the party or-

DL: Well it was interesting because in, before the '70s, which is when former governor Edwards got the uh, open primary system adopted by the state legislature, at that time we had closed primaries. So with the vast majority of people being Democrat, the Democrat primaries at the time they used to say were tantamount to election, because the other, we had no Republicans even, har-, hardly any to run for office.

DD: There was no general election.

DL: Well, there was a general election, yes. And you could vote in that no matter how you were registered, but, but 90 percent of all the activity took place in the Democrat Primaries. And they just called 'em the "primary," because everybody, 90 percent were Democrat or whatever, so it, it wasn't even called the party primary, although actually that's what it was. But we never had enough Republicans early on, so finally we began to have Republican candidates representing the party in a closed primary. And a lot of times the, the candidate would just simply be anointed in a sense, because you didn't have enough to, to compete and run against, now you have that. Sometimes you have more Republicans than Democrats for an office today. But, but back then, it, it, we had the Democrats would have a first primary, then the second primary, and then the general election. So it could be a bloody battle uh, to get, to get over here to the second primary and then the Republican candidate would just be waiting in the wings. Because uh, like I said, he, he just got nominated, in fact he might not have even had a primary run in. So we got in the finals, we began to elect a few here and there. So I think the story was that the governor got in in the '70s and finally decided that this was too much of a bloody mess to take part in, so let's just have an open primary. So now since then all the candidates, it's kind of a massive footrace. All of the candidates, regardless of party affiliation, get into a massive footrace. And then the top two emerge, if you're lookin' at one position such as governor, and no matter what their party affiliation, it can be two Democrats, two Republicans, or one of each. And that's, that has emerged since the 1970s. Now there, there's a fair number of people, particularly in the Republican Party, although not all, who feel as though we've got big enough now as a party and there's s-, there's some 600,000 registered Republicans in the state, still far out numbered by the Democrats, but enough to say, let's go back to the closed primaries and, however, most Democrats oppose that now and some Republicans for different reasons of course. So that's where we are today.

DD: Yeah, I've heard from Charlie de Gravelle that Mister Edwards actively campaigned to change that system, because he was running in too many elections.

DL: Well that's what I just said. Long ago it got bloody so he uh, he said enough of this three election periods, you know, it's takin' a lot of toll, costs a lot of money, and so let's just open it up. And, and, now that, that allowed, I think that was a good thing for the Republican Party. That allowed the party to, to kind of be on an equal footing in, in, in the political races. But uh, but since that time, I sense it as a problem, 'cause I think that kind of a everybody in, in the whole race together, it sort of blurs the distinction that you want to create between parties. A party is supposed to be

nothin' but a vehicle to express the views of the majority of that party and, and to express a philosophy of government. And I think we've blurred that a little bit by just everybody jumping in the same race. So there, there's a, that's, that's a feeling on part of a fair number of people who say let's go back to the closed primary and each party nominate. Now, one problem with that, of course, is you have a growing group Independent registering. So a lot of people register that way or you still have French Party a-, uh, registration, but it's very, very minute. The only thing that you have of a comparable, and it's not a party, it's just people saying I don't want either of the major parties, I want to be an independent.

DD: Right.

DL: So.

DD: So were people reluctant back when you first went to, became a Republican?

DL: Well, well, yeah, because they would say, and, and with all due respect, I mean, the registrar of voters would tell people, "Well you can't vote if you register as a Republican." What they were telling them in effect was, "You can't vote in the primaries," which were Democrat primaries before the '70s, "because you're not registered as a Democrat, so your, your vote not gonna be counted." And the answer, of course, I used, I would say, you know, you'd say that, "Well you can still vote in the general election." So you might have only two Democrats to vote for before we had Republican candidates, but when you began to nominate candidates, and eventually had enough to run, uh, to be uh, be nominated by the party against other Republicans. Uh, you know, then, then it, it kind of began to open up. And then you would see, let's say, two or three Republicans running in the primary, you see. But early on, it, it, it was uh, I think a plus for the Republicans. Now it's a question as to whether that's the, the best arrangement.

DD: You-

DL: But competitive politics is, this is the, the main reason that, that I switched over, not, not to mention having a conservative philosophy, but uh, but besides that, I think competition in politics is good like anything else. Like in education, in business, and whatever. Uh, so let's get out and compete for the electorate, let's present what we believe in and what we think is the right philosophy of, of governing and see what the people think. So it, it becomes a much better vehicle that way.

DD: Okay. Tell me more about those who paved the way for Republicans to have a voice in this area.

DL: Well it started uh, earlier, there was, the old system back then, the parish government system, was [polish juries?], you probably know. And so we had a couple guys that got elected to that. And uh, said, well, you know, hey we got a Republican. Hm. They're not drawing horns, they don't look too bad, they, you know, they don't uh, uh, spout devilish things. [Laughs] They began to see, you know, maybe they're not too bad a guy. But uh, find or Republican here or there, although we were pretty rare, and it just grew, more and more people began to feel like, well, and actually, in the s-, when, when Edwards put the open primary in in the '70s, uh, what people began to realize then with this system even as we have it today, you can register as a Republican. You still have a Democrat friend running for office, you can still vote for that Democrat. There's still a few people here and there who are still not up to date or up to snuff on this and they're kind of confused about being registered as a Republican. But, but most everybody began to understand, you can register as a Republican, you still support a Democrat if you feel like that guy's the best candidate in the race or you have a personal friend, you know is a good person and he's in the other party, you're gonna support him. So you can still do that. It, it, it's, it doesn't lock you in to have a, a primary in which you may select a Republican and then you look at the candidates and, and a lot of people vote, and they will tell you today, they vote on the best candidate, they don't pick their vote just for party. Although I would say those of us in the Republican Party who have come along all these years have basically tended to vote Republican as long as the candidate is a good, decent candidate, we're gonna say, we wanna continue the two-party competitive system. So

we're gonna vote for a Republican. I mean, if he's that bad a guy, then you're gonna back off. You had the David Duke [Inaudible].

DD: Right. Were, were some people reluctant to change um.

DL: Oh, yes and no. Some, some kind of came along, you know, 'cause they said, well I've been voting that way. You have a lot of Democrats today still will tell you, "Well, I'm Democrat but I vote Republican." Some said they've never voted for a Democrat president. Well, but they're still Democrats. But uh, there might have been some reluctance I guess. Had to convince themselves it was okay to do so and still be able to have good vote options.

DD: Is there a reason you think why they kind of clung to their old party?

DL: Ah, tradition. Parents were Democrats, their grandparents, you know, they were, they were solid in, in, in the tradition of the southern Democrat. And, and for no reason I don't think any other than that, but obviously a fair number of people became convinced it was not such a bad idea to do so and they could still vote for whoever they wanted to. So as a result, as I said, we have uh, like I think it's uh, maybe it's 625, 650,000 registered Republicans in the state. It's over 600,000, I know that. And Democrats, of course, are still a little bit over a million. So we're obviously still outnumbered, but that's a pretty good figure considering at one time, you could almost count the Republicans in any given city, you know.

DD: Well I've heard-

DL: On my hands.

DD: I've heard of what was called the "lonely years" around here back in the '40s. [DL chuckles] And-

DL: Oh, yeah. They, they were, you could say, "Oh, there goes a Republican." You know. And kind of an odd situation. But uh, just weren't too many people. Few of the old timers had come along way back, who, who liked Eisenhower in the '50s. But uh, I don't know if too many today could go back much further than that. Calvin Coolidge or, [Both laughing] well, that's goin' way back, you know. But uh, it just, some, some people just felt that uh, and, and to degree there was kind of a patronage thing, too, because depending on who the president was, uh, when Ike was president, starting in the early '50s, let's see you have, of course, we had uh, Roosevelt and Truman. But postmasters are appointed by the president, as you know, so whoever the pres-, they're gonna find a Republican down here to be post.

DD: Oh yeah.

DL: So we had, when I, we had a few Republican postmasters.

DD: Really?

DL: Well sure, because Eisenhower served eight years, you know, '52 to '60. So uh, he, I mean, that, that, there was always a little patronage. Uh, U.S. attorneys appointed from the White House of course, you know. And, and there was some Republicans there. So you began to see with the, with the presidential election uh, some patronage activity which kind of led to broadening the party a little bit.

DD: And so it did kind of help it spread around here?

DL: Yeah, a little bit, little bit.

DD: Okay. Was it a significant force maybe or was it-

DL: Well, no not, it, not a, a force in a way, only, people began to see this take place, but once they got appointed to those positions uh, the, the problems, like a U.S. attorney or if they got appointed federal judge, for example, then they disappear from the political scene, because you can't be a judge and, and a postmaster and get involved that much in politics I wouldn't think, you know. So in, in a sense we got some Republicans appointed to office, but then it kind of took 'em out of the picture, because they were not, you know, they couldn't uh, be leaders in party politics in that sense. Certainly not if you're a judge.

DD: Right. You have to kind of be above that.

DL: Correct.

DD: Um, was there any kind of conflict between the new Republicans and the old Democrats or did they, everyone kind of get along and just kind of accept ideas, these new ideas?

DL: [Sighing] Uh, well, well it was uh, a, a hesitance on the part of traditional, gonna use the term, dyed in the wool Democrats who were not gonna change. And, and uh, certainly some political disagreements arose between them and people who they saw switching to the Democrat Party if, if that's what you're talkin' about, what your question-

DD: Yeah-

DL: I'm not sure.

DD: I mean, was there any like, did they see them as "those" Republicans or were they just-

DL: Yeah.

DD: Just went along with the business as before even though they were a different party?

DL: Well no, I think it was a different attitude, you know, there was uh [Slight pause] I don't know, may-, maybe in some quarters a kind of a resentment. You know, that you would, that you would, that you would leave the history and the tradition of the Democrat Party in the area and become and upstart in the Republican Party. So there was maybe a little bit of that feeling, but I, I don't think any, we sensed anything like serious animosity, it was just a kind of a surprise and a puzzlement to people. "Well, why would you switch to Republican, you know, this is Democrat state." And so on and so. All, most of the politicians were Democrats, the elected officials Democrats, and uh, and, and, and they was a party in uh, in control. So you had to, you had to kind of be in, in, in a position of bucking the establishment in that sense, you see. So, it happened.

DD: Well um, why do you think Republicanism came to Acadiana?

DL: Well oil industry brought in a lot people. You know, this uh [Slight pause] was not a, a, a, as homogenized, if you can say it that way, a group of, of people or citizens once was [Recording breaks off] maybe 90 percent Cajun, 90 percent Catholic, whatever. So a lot of that changed when the oil industry developed so strongly beginning in the '50s and people from Texas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, California, wherever, came into the state, many of them still here. And there became a pretty nice blend of oil industry and local Cajuns. And many married locally and so on. So uh, you had that blend over the years, and I, I think some influence came into play too, not that we don't have some conservative Cajuns, we do. A fair number. But, but the influence of a lot of the oil people coming from these states, it was mostly a conservative influence. It, it had a little play on I think the, the flavor of politics locally and still does to this day because uh, I, I would say most, I'm not gonna, somebody would maybe challenge me, but I'm gonna say most of, of the people in the oil industry tend to be on the conservative side of politics. And today mostly on the Republican side of politics. Uh, so that certainly had an affect on, on the political climate as, as you say, in this area over the years and still does today. This is kind of known as a, maybe a conservative parish, certainly Democrats and

liberal philosophies have their, their position, but I would say if you had to measure on a whole, it would be mostly conservative. And, and the oil industry, I think, had a lot, a lot of play in that.

DD: Okay. Um, did, did people welcome these new ideas that these people were bringing in? They, this kind of ties in with previous questions, but-

DL: Yeah. I-

DD: I'm, I'm s-, they brought in conservative philosophies, they also brought in Protestantism, correct?

DL: Well that's true, that's true. There w-, there certainly uh, that uh, the situation being like 80 or 90 percent Catholic has certainly changed. It may be 50 percent today, whatever the number is. So that changed also. And uh, to some degree that, they brought in the changing political philosophy also. So that's tr-, there's some truth to that.

DD: So do you think the people accepted these ideas or were they resentful of the change coming to the area? The general change?

DL: Well when you say "people"-

DD: Um, the, the natives, I'm sorry.

DL: That's, I'd say overall no. I think uh, I think there's a pretty general acceptance of, of uh, this new trend that came into, into being. The oil people from different states, different thinking, different ideas, their philosophy, different philosophies of government. And so, I'm, I'm gonna say it was, you know, fairly well accepted. Certainly the oil industry of today is well-accepted in this area as being a mainstay.

DD: Okay. Now you first were directly involved in politics starting in the '70s, right? Um-

DL: Yeah, the first, the elected office was school board, 1972.

DD: Right. Was that difficult running as a Republican?

DL: Uh, it wasn't then because I had all those years on television, the people knew, and the, then the '72 race, I'm tryin' to think um… uh, I think the open primary was created then. I, I may be off a little bit on, on the date, I know it was in the '70s.

DD: I think it's '73 or-

DL: Came later. So that '72 year, we, we probably uh, we probably had a, the primary. And I think there were two of us. Uh, a guy named Charlie Patterson, he's dead and gone now. But he and I were the f-, maybe the first two Republicans, certainly in modern times, I think, to be elected to the school board. I may stand corrected on that, but I think that's the case. 'Cause I, I recall we, we walked the streets and, and, and, and south side Lafayette had become a pretty much of a conservative, Republican stronghold. That's where most of the two-party system developed. And we walked the streets together back then, got elected in 1972. And this open primary thing, as you say, maybe in '73 or four or somethin' to that effect. So uh, in the reelection, Charlie, uh, Chuck Patterson got reelected also in '78. By then it was open primary. I think we may have, I had temporary opp-, opposition. Someone else registered, but dropped out before the uh, the actual election day. So in effect I was reelected without opposition. I think Chuck may have been also, but if, if not, he, he won his reelection also. So it, it became known at the time that, well, the south side was, was a place in which it wasn't too difficult for [Inaudible] conservatives, Republicans to get elected to office there. And that is still fairly true to this day, some of the precincts out here uh, in some of the precincts, not the parish, but the precincts, Republicans may even outnumber some Democrats.

DD: I've heard the south side was a very conservative area.

DL: Very, very much so to this day.

DD: Um, do you know [Slight pause] what industry the people that lived there work in, maybe? Are they mostly oil people or-

DL: Oh a good a bit is still oil and gas people, related industry, service industries, uh-

DD: Maybe not directly involved-

DL: Drilling, a lot of independent operators, uh, geologists. Yeah, we still, you know, and then you have a lot of professional people who tend to be more Republican. Attorneys, the doctors, uh, uh, not the trial attorneys.

DD: No. [Laughs]

DL: But the others.

DD: The good attorneys.

DL: The te-, defense guys.

DD: Right. [Chuckles] Um, did it become easier to run when you ran for mayor in 1980?

DL: Well a lot, like I said, I use the expression a lot of ground had been plowed by that time. Some of those guys that got in, I mentioned polish jury, we had a couple got elected to the legislature in the '60s. Uh, it was tough to be reelected, but uh, and, and especially in a special election and if there was only like on thing on the ballet, one, one uh, one uh, uh, race on the ballet. When you had to get on the ballet in, when there were local and state like sheriff's office and local officials, legislatures, governor's race, they tend to pull more Democrats in. They would pull votes in with them. They were kind of like became an informal slate. But if there was a special election to fill unexpired term, for example, we, we had better opportunities to elect Republicans then.

DD: 'Cause there were less people voting-

DL: W-, well, less people to be brought in to vote Democrat 'cause there were six or seven other uh, top officials who were Democrats, who could pull in a lot of votes. And when that would happen, they could sort of pull votes with them. The, the, the ticket voting h-, diminished a great extent over the years. That was one of the big changes that took place, because they still kind of, people sort of run together and you'll, you'll see there'll be little informal ticket arrangements, it depends. Not so much from Republicans on that, although it, it does happen some. But early on, it was nothing but tickets, way back in '40s, '50s, maybe even '60s, where you would line up, uh, with a party and so on. And the numbers would be arranged and you'd list the numbers. And so, so the governor would have a number, and the sheriff would have a numbers, and the legislator candidates would have numbers, and you'd have 'em all listed. So, "Here, here's, here's the vote. Here's how, here's how we recommend you vote." But that changed over the years, again. And, and to some degree, the open primary helped, when we had more candidates, Republican candidates in the mix. And it was kind of hard to say where was a, a slate or where was a, a ticket.

DD: People became more independent-

DL: Tickets, ah, yeah, they, it's kind of gone pretty much by the wayside, I think.

DD: Right. Tell me more about your years as mayor. Um, what kind of changes did you see in Lafayette at the time and how did you kind of react to those changes and such things?

DL: Well one of the things, when I came into office in 1980, uh, the economy was at a high level, nationally and, and it, it continued on into the '80s, as you know, that's when Regan became president. Until the mid-'80s we had the economic dip that, that took place back then. And uh, so we saw a high level of economy, we saw the fall in the economy, and then in the late '80s and ear-, into the early '90s, to finish my last term, we, we were on a comeback. So we've had all three uh, modes: high, low, and then comeback. And we had to make some adjustments because uh, you know, President Nixon back then, it, had pushed this revenue sharing, which the feds were uh, certain amount of uh, appropriate, uh, funds were appropriated directly to local governments like that, so that began to change with the Regan years. And, and so we had to back out a lot of the uh, budgetary commitments that were made based on the revenue sharing funds coming in. Which uh, which kind of took its toll in a way, but I think it ended up being a good thing, because we were less dependent on funds from, from the feds, which became a volatile situation. I mean, you had, one group would want to say well let's appropriate, and the other would, would cut back. So it was never anything af-, after awhile that you could feel like you wanted to depend on for a long period of time, to make long-range planning available. So we, we made our adjustments on that. We also uh, we built a pretty good size sewage plant in the south end of town 'cause a good bit of the sewage waste was not being treated properly, it was dumped in the river and we had a lot of pollution and that sort of thing. So rather, we looked at that, rather than wait to see when the feds would appropriate funds for this kind of thing, which they were doing, but it would take years to build a case and you had to kind of get in line with others. So we, we visited the people in Dallas and checked that out and came back and I said, "Well, let's see if we can do this by fee on the uh, on usage, household usage." And we got the council to approve that and built a plant. And uh, since that time, you know, we've been, we've been pretty consistently uh, 100 percent in processing sewage in Lafayette. So that's kind of a philosophy of government that came into play and I think uh, we instituted some changes similar to that in other areas.

DD: Tried to become more independent of the feds?

DL: Yeah, feds and state. I think that's one of the problems that we have today is that um, we still exist somewhat under the aura of Huey Long philosophy of politics that the symbol of the state is the pelican taking care of the baby pelican. So we're taking everybody in the state from the state-level more so than other states. In other words, that's where the power is, the government is very powerful, and the state is very powerful. So you have teacher groups and other groups who represent various agencies providing public needs who have to constantly go to the state uh, for those, those needs to be, to be fulfilled. And as a results, we, we tend to lean more heavily on state government, so you hear the talk today about how the state government's in trouble. And, and to a great extent we uh, we do have our, accept our local responsibilities, but we tend in particularly maybe education stands out, in leaning more on the state to fund it than in so many states local school systems. Local county, i.e. parish governments uh, tend to fund education more on the local level. And we don't.

DD: Right. Okay. How did you re-, this may be a touchy question, but how did you react to the downturn of the '80s when you were in office?

DL: Uh, made our adjustments as I said. We, we had to-

DD: So tried to-

DL: We had to change the revenue sharing structure uh, we had to hold back on, certainly, we had to hold back on, in raises for public employees for a two or three year period, I'm tryin', I don't exactly remember how long that was, but it was more than one year. Uh, we had to uh, in effect do as much or more in, in the way of productivity with no increase in resources, if not even a cutback. So there, there was some serious adjustments that had to be made. We had to work with the council on that, we had to work with the people of the city. And one of the things we did, was

when, when we had the pretty serious downturn, recession-type situation, was we, we developed a little planning project we called uh… uh, oh my gosh, I'm [Both chuckle] I've gotta think for a minute here. It, it was a Lafayette uh, t-, this was like in ni-, mid-'80s, so we called it Lafayette 2000. And we had short-term and long-term goals in, in the project. And we got probably four to five hundred people from all walks of life. These were volunteers, they were not paid or anything. We had some key people who we had put in charge of various committees. And uh, these committees, uh, you know, included um… [Someone comes into the room; DL says they are in an interview; recording is turned off] That was the-

DD: Lafayette 2000.

DL: Yeah. Short, Lafayette 2000 um, short-term, long-term goals. We got close to 500 volunteers who met, I was gonna mention the various committees that, you know, they had to do you know with uh, with police and fire protection, they had to do with utilities, uh, planning, uh, recreation, uh, we even had a committee on education, although our system of government, unlike in some other states or other areas, uh, state, l-, local government have, have sometimes things to do with the school system. We don't. But we had an education committee because there it was so much a part of our community life, you know. So had these various committees that functioned to in effect meet and it was a year-long project. We had the mayor of San Antonio come and speak to us, because San Antonio had done a similar project, looking ahead 10, 15 years, and beyond. To help kick it off, we had it in the Cajun Dome, it was open at that time. So this had to be about 1986. The Dome was open in '85. So uh, we, all these people came together and met on a regular basis over a year and produced a nice book about uh, what, what the goals, short-term and long-term goals ought to be and how to try to achieve them over the years. Transportation, I should've mentioned that. Capital improvements, uh, so on. So they looked at, at every phase of our community life and it did two things. It helped us make some serious plans and, and we brought a couple of people on board to follow through with those. But it also, I think it, it gave our people something to get involved in, because, you know, we had developed something to the extent of maybe close to 15 percent unemployment. We had never seen anything worse than three or four percent unemployment here. And this was a, a killer. Any-, and a lot of people left town, as you probably know. And so it was, it was pretty good setback. So people coming together like this to do some planning and to see what we had. And they had people come forth, you know, to explain what was taking part as far as their own lives and their own professions were concerned, and how do we plan ahead, what do we need to look at, what do we need to do. So it, it, it brought a lot of people together at, at s-, serious time of a downturn in the economy and to say, if, if nothin' else, we, we're, we're gonna, we're meeting, we're talking about this problem we have, we, we, we're looking at some possible solutions, new ideas came forth. So it kind of, I think, sparked a little bit of positive activity when, in a couple of years when the upturn began again, I, I think that had helped us lay some groundwork for that.

DD: What other, what were some the other- [Cell phone ringing]

DL: Cut it again. [Recording turned off]

DD: I was about to ask you somethin', so we're, we're good now.

DL: [Chuckling] Okay.

DD: What were some of the other plans that, uh, this program developed other than transportation and capital improvement? Were some of the-

DL: Well recreation, I mentioned that, that was a big area. Uh, we had uh, for example, we had some, some good ideas presented in, in the area of education. I'll never forget that we had a, a, a person come in from the state of Tennessee. Was a lady who uh, we in charge of the governor's program which was called a "career ladder" program. And it, it, it touched on a philosophy of education which said that uh, we could look at a kind of, sort of a merit system in recognizing and paying the teachers. Now, when I was on school board, I mentioned like a merit system, but there,

there was a, some n-, generatin' negative feelings 'cause they felt, well, this could be, politics could be played in somethin' like uh, who's gonna decide who, who will benefit from a merit system. But the governor instituted, this was Lamar Alexander, by the way, he just got elected to the Senate, United States Senate from Tennessee. He was governor at the time. He run for president later and didn't make it, of course. But he had instituted this project and the lady was in charge of it, which said that teachers could be encouraged to move up in their own field of endeavor by becoming "master teachers." Not principals or supervisors, but there was a level in the teacher ranks which they could move up. And they would be, people who had considerable time teaching and experience and knowledge and training, and could import that to younger teachers they would work with, they could also help develop curriculum, which would place, obviously, more responsibility on their shoulders, therefore they would get better pay. So in the state of Tennessee this worked to the extent of where not all the teachers were locked in one big giant step of a pay scale. Everybody makes the same. Well, there's a little discouragement there for the teachers who had some time and there's no way to move up unless you just stayed line enough on the vine, and you cling to the vine. But this way some people could move up maybe a little quicker than others if, with the experience, and training, and the knowledge of curriculum, and they could impart that to other teachers. So uh, we had some in-, now, we never got too far with it, [Both chuckle] 'cause, again, the, you had to convince the state. And then some of the uh, some of the leadership in the teacher organizations, for whatever reason, they were pretty much opposed to this. They don't like the idea of talking merit. So. At any rate, it, it, it came across as an interesting philosophy to look at, I still think to this day that we ought to be looking at something like that to help really focus as they say, and there's a big argument in the state now about how many, how much money the state commits to education that actually goes to the classroom and not to too much administrative bureaucracy, which ties up a lot of the funds. 'Cause we get top-heavy that way. So why not say to the teachers, "Look, this is way we're gonna, you can move up in your own field. You became knowledgeable in math."

DD: [Inaudible, overlapping speech] teacher.

DL: "You become knowledgeable in science. Therefore you're not a principal, but you work with the other teachers under the supervisor people, obviously. And you help them come along and develop. And you're gonna get paid more."

DD: Sounds like an excellent program.

DL: Simple. It worked in Tennessee. Listen, this is in the eigh-, in the mid-'80s. I'll never forget, there was some master teachers making in the range of like 40,000 or so a year, that was like 17 or 18 years ago, right? I mean, you have people today that are not makin' that money in this system.

DD: Not [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

DL: But you can't pay everybody that, there isn't that kind of money. But why not convert, why not-

DD: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

DL: Why not encourage some teachers to move up in their own field?

DD: Sounds like a great idea.

DL: So there was recreation, there was education, we, we had to work with the state a lot of in capital improvements because uh, here in Lafayette every major artery, street artery, is a state jurisdiction route. I mean, you can take Johnston, Penhook, [Boss?] Street, uh, name 'em all, University. The only local one that we have is Congress. Now the only other one we're gonna have is the [Camellia?] Boulevard Crossing. That's, that's gonna be a major route and that will be local. But the rest were, all except Congress, were all state. And it, it takes so long for the state to, to move in these areas. We had tried, one thing we did try when I got into office with Governor Treen at first and

Edwards later, when he went back in, was to say let us as a local entity, local government contract with the state to uh, provide certain capital improvements: streets, and drainage, whatever. Well they wanted the drainage business, [we were?], but streets. It, it would take them much longer, there was an overlay project once for Johnston Street, years ago. We got the state, it's a state route, they finally did it at night time, which, which helped on the traffic situation. But it took them almost a year just to negotiate a contract with an engineering firm to do the design. We could've done it in two or three weeks. So we said, why not let local government take that ball and run with it. You gonna pay for it, we'll meet your specifications, though. We'll do it the way you want it done, but let us get our people involved. We can do it a lot quicker. Nothin' happened, though.

DD: S-, so basically to sum what you were just saying, you basically did a lot to encourage businesses to move back in and to set yourself up for future growth.

DL: Well, you-

DD: In a way.

DL: One thing city government has to do and I've felt this, most important maybe of all the requirements of local government was to make sure that our facilities were there so that an economy could exist and could draw, and business could develop and locate. And, and, you know, we, we would provide, particularly utilities, and that's, that's been a big asset of this city for, for generations now. Uh, the ci-, I always came into office, you know, felling well private enterprise is the way to go. And we did work in some areas to contract our for services, particularly in public works. But this is a city-owned utilities system, but it became obvious to me that it was a very good and a very successful system that became a serious asset for this city.

DD: Is that LUS?

DL: LUS today. We never called it LUS then, we just called it City Utilities. It was called Lafayette Utilities System, so it shortened to LUS. And the city has owned that over the years. And the way that is structured to the benefit of the growth of Lafayette and still the rates are low and stable to this day, is that there, there has been uh, a bond resolution within that utilities system which says a couple of things. Number one, that an engineering firm and particularly when it's been with the city 50 or 60 years, must approve the city utilities director the mayor appoints. Because there are many people who are bond holders who have bought bonds in the Lafayette Utilities System and must be represented to be paid, paid their, their, their coo-, their payments on the bonds. And so they have to looked at in the system, and you have to have somebody with knowledge and experience to run it. Secondly, the bond resolution says that the first obligation of the revenues that come in, from the fees that you charge, you have to pay the expenses to operate and the bond holders. Right off the top. Then from the revenues remaining, the formula when I was there was like twelve and a half percent, they may have enhanced that somewhat. But twelve and a half percent of the remaining revenues would then go the city's general fund to operate the rest of the city. And that's police, and fire, and recreation, administrative costs, uh, uh, anything had to do with administrative, not capital, administrative expenses. So it, it has been a major asset to the general fund of the city. You have three funds: general fund, capital improvements, and utilities. So that amount of money coming from utilities is maybe the largest source of revenue for the city's general fund for administrative duties. And without that, you know, they'd need additional taxes of course.

DD: Right, that's what I was going to-

DL: Well some people make a case, they say, "Well take that out of utilities, let, let 'em take care of their own business and we'll." But it [Chuckling] would not be a popular thing to do to come back and say, "Well, we might lower your utility bill a little bit, but we're gonna raise taxes here, because the general fund." And that twelve and a half percent when I left office in 1992 was pretty close 12 or 13 million dollars.

DD: And you could-

DL: It's more than that now.

DD: You can take a small percentage on the utilities and make more than if you would on sales tax.

DL: Well it, it, it, it bolstered the general fund. We have sales tax two percent that goes into it. By the way, the, the sales tax, the-, there, there are two pennies in the city. One cent in 1961 when Ray Bertrand was mayor, one in 1985 when I was. So we at two percent. Now of the, they've changed it since, but of the uh, one cent sales tax in '61, it was approved [on] 75 cents on every dollar, 75 percent would go to capital spending, 25 percent only on operations and maintenance. The '85 tax, people were so cog-, cognizant of in their minds the need to, to provide capital improvements, streets, drainage, etcetera, 85 percent of it, 85 cents of every dollar, would go into capital needs, only 15 percent o and m. In a recent election, that formula was change. I don't know if it was 75, 25 now like the original penny, but they lessened the amount going in the capital improvements and increased the o and m part of it. And that had to be approved by the people, of course, 'cause that's how it was originally set up when it was vote on. That, that one penny sales tax. So any time the people decide on somethin', you gotta go back to them to, you gonna make a change. So, so the utilities system has been run efficiently, it's, it's had some pretty good overseeing by the engineering firm, it's one that's based in Colorado for a good many years, R. W. Beck. And then, and then the mayors have had to be careful that they bring in qualified people to head up the utilities. And, and the bond resolution says this. It's not a choice that you can say, "Well I'm gonna put a friend-"

DD: Because the bond holders are basically-

DL: 'Cause the bond holders need to be properly represented. And if you're not careful with that, then your bonds would be badly rated. You would have, you would have low, low yield type uh, or whatever. [Pause] And it would be difficult then to operate a system with some low rates, which the city has been able to do over the years. So that's, that's uh, a challenge the local government is to uh, see that those systems work properly. And utilities, as I said again, I can't say enough, it's been a major asset to this city all these many years. Still is today.

DD: It sounds like people were really looking to the future when, after the, when the downturn came around, they were trying to build for the future.

DL: Yeah.

DD: Okay.

DL: Well then see oddly enough, the uh, o-, one of the things that happened when Jimmy Carter was president in the late '70s, he said, "Well we got to get away from gas." You know, we had the embargo in '73 and, and all the shortages and all that. Unfortunately I think because of bad government policy that, that kept a lid on, on, on rates. So at, at times it became inefficient to try to go out and drill for, for gas. And so, you know, they just, we [didn't have but?] shortages. They said, Well let's, 'cause we got, instead of helping to develop gas, they said, well we got a shortage, then you got to go to coal. So as a result, the city entered into what has been some long-term contracts to buy coal from Wyoming. So utilities system in the late '70s, the city built a uh, a coal-fired generation plant up near Alexandria, still exists today. Uh, which is supplied solely by coal, bought from Wyoming, low sulfur coal. Uh, we went into partnership with [Kleeco?], which at the time owned 50 percent, but later sold 40 percent of their 50, i.e. 20 percent, to a consortium of five different cities. You might have an interest in looking into that one day. Called LE-, LEPA, Louisiana Energy and Power Authority. And Lafayette still owns 50, Kleeco owns 30, and the consortium 20, but Kleeco is the operating partner. And Kleeco owns two 100 car trains and so does the city of Lafayette. And those trains are shuttling back and forth from Wyoming with coal for the operation. And, and coal-fire generation accounts for somewhere between 70 and 80 percent of, of the power that, that uh, powers this city, electricity and so on. And only 20 to 30 percent comes from gas, gas turbines over here locally.

DD: That's interesting-

DL: Plant on Walker Road. So uh, in, in a sense because of long-range coal contracts and coal being cheap, the city has been able to maintain some low stable rates. And because of the growth in the city we were annexing back then to a great extent. And uh, what we were able to do, we acquired before I left office about 11 or 12,000 customers from Slemco and which was then Gulf State Utilities, now Entergy, which had a lot of customers in the city. So we expanded the base, we stabilized the rates, economies of scales, and, and the rates today are still not, not much more than what they were then, maybe, maybe then we'd be six cents per, per kilowatt hour or something to that affect. So uh, it, it's, like I said, it's, it's an interesting story of the city's utility system and how we were set up, how it's run, and how it's developed over the years.

DD: That is interesting, because the city that's basically founded on oil and gas is being run by coal. It is.

DL: That's right. Now it, it was all, in, in a sense it's been a, a good consistent operation, but in a sense it's been very disturbing in that an area in a state that produces so much gas, this city could not be a major customer. Now we've bou-, we bought a fair amount of gas because at the time about 20 percent of our power came from gas. I think it may be 25 percent or so today, a little bit more than that. But uh, it, we would spend, the city would spent 60, 70 million dollars a year to buy coal. And we would be a nice customer for gas, which would help our economy, local business, but we had to buy-

DD: That's just the way it is.

DL: We had to buy coal. So in, in, in one sense it, it was good in a way for, for the city, but in another sense, we were not a good gas customer, which we could have been had the government not had such restrictive policies.

DD: Right. Now off the subject a bit, um, some one informed me to ask you about Mister Heymann, that you knew Mister Heymann personally?

DL: Uh, both Heymanns. Herbert Heymann who just died recently this past year and, and his father, who was the uh, was the idea behind, well, he and some oil people together, were the idea behind developing the, the Oil Center. And I did get to meet him on a couple of occasions. Not uh, not as a personal friend or anything, but having been on the school board and then, I'm trying to recall. I'm not sure the year he died as to whether that was, I think it was before I became mayor, but I did get a chance to visit with him. But I never got to know him that well, but he was always impressive because, you know, he was known as an entrepreneur slash philanthropist then. Mister, Mister Maurice. [DD chuckles] Was a, had a lot to do with, you know, with, with planning and development of this city. Oil Center primarily. And then, then his son Herbert picked up where he left and he continued that tradition. And he was just a great guy to work with. And uh, he was a supporter.

DD: Okay. [Pause] Um, and you said you were with the MMS for a couple years?

DL: Yeah. That, I got appointed uh, by the first President Bush on, on MMS as a two-year term. I think maybe in about 1990. Or either a two-year term or I just served two years, I, I don't recall that. But when Clinton came in in '92 he brought their own people in, it was a political appointment. So I was only able to be on the, on the MMS for a couple of years.

DD: Okay. And did you do anything significant there or?

DL: No, I just-

DD: Okay.

DL: The only thing I did was to uh, to raise a voice in what I felt was a, a compatible arrangement between nature and the environment and the oil and gas industry. You know, there are a lot of people automatically think that world pollution and so on. And to say, you know, we invited them to, members of the board who felt otherwise, to come down and visit our areas, Avery Island, Jefferson Island, places where there was a lot of natural foliage, animals, birds, etcetera, who coexisted with oil rigs all around 'em. So, and fish especially, which uh, you know, but uh, I don't know the [Slight pause] the, the flavor of most of the members of that committee, I think. I don't know what it is today, I can't really say, but it was sort of like the oil industry's a problem for us in the area. But I was not really on long enough. Just a year and a half or two to-

DD: And plus you were mayor at the time-

DL: Yeah, that's right.

DD: A full-time gig I'm sure.

DL: Yeah. Uh, it was a mutual friend who, who talked to me about that, I guess arranged the appointment. [Pause] Um, but that, it, it was interesting to go to the meetings and met a few people. There, there was a guy from Houston, an oil man I think, who was on the board. I visited him once in Houston. Ne-, never was on long enough to get a full flavor of that operation.

DD: Right. I, I think they've changed about, I don't think they have any problems with oil and gas and the environment anymore, I think they see the-

DL: Really?

DD: Working relationship between the two.

DL: Do they? That would be interesting if that, if that's developed, that's take place, 'cause I kind of felt there, there was little negative on the, the flavor of the board at that time. So that's, that'll be good if that's taken place.

DD: Is there, is there anything else you'd like to add about the oil industry or politics in general?

DL: No, I, I've observed, I'm, it's kind of interesting to watch the next uh, governor's race [Both chuckling] take place. You know, we tend to, to think a lot of more about that at the higher levels government, president, the governor, and so on. And certainly it's more significant, you know, to know what's goin' on to, to make the right decisions there, but sometimes we forget about um, how important it is to get involved locally and to be aware of what's taking place in your local government and your local officials and what they think and what they, how they make their decisions and uh, and it certainly has a great affect on us locally. But uh, I don't know, we kind of tend to, to lean, we've been sort of taught, I think, to lean on higher levels of government and really you ought to do that only if you can't get somethin' accomplished locally. And start at the local level.

DD: I agree.

DL: And move on up. So I kind of hope that uh, maybe we continue to try to focus on that to see what, especially in the state and local government, what more we can do for ourselves rather than to lean on the state. Because it's not only more difficult to do, but you, you just transferring power up, uh, more to-

DD: You're giving away power basically.

DL: Giving it away, moving it up, transferring it on to higher levels of government. And, I mean, look, the teachers, the first thing that happens when they talk about the need for a teacher pay raise is the delegation to Baton Rouge. It's

just automatic. They may, I mean, they, it's not to say that they haven't talked to local school board, but that's where they look for most of the, it's, "Well the governor's gotta do this." And, and Governor Foster has focused a lot on, on education and higher education and so on. But uh, I, I, they need to find ways to see [Slight pause] uh, what, what can we do locally to, if we want to improve our system more than just wait for the state to decide how the funds are gonna be appropriated.

DD: Quicker locally-

DL: And, you know, I, there's, there's a, there's a sacred out there called Homestead Exemption, as you are aware of that, and, and we certainly, and myself included, would not want to see anything like a confiscatory arrangement like in the state of California a few years back in which property taxes got so high they were prohibitive and they discouraged home ownership. But maybe to look at way-, let, let's say the state would say probably not in our lifetime, maybe in yours, you might see the change in Homestead Exemption, but let's say they would say, "Well, let's make this a local option type of situation." If the Lafayette Parish School Board wants to go to its people and say, uh, maybe instead of the 75,000 dollars exemption, we might lower it to 50, and we pick up a little extra revenue. I know this is very controversial with some people and I'm not for high, high property taxes, I want-

DD: But, but if you give-

DL: But just a little, yeah. And we say we're gonna take that money and we're gonna pay our teachers better, we're gonna, we're gonna boost up the classroom activity and so on. Then-

DD: All it takes is a little bit from everyone.

DL: Would, would help, that's right. You broaden the base that way. Now the other thing is, and I know a lot of educators don't like the idea, but I see the governor and some others are talking about a voucher system. And we mentioned awhile ago the competitive aspect of things. Uh, to me, this would, would not destroy the pubic system as they say, to me it would help boost it, because it, there's nothing like a competitive element to say, "If we have the risk of losing some students, if we don't perk up the system, then we better do it." And find a way to do it with results or else peop-, people, parents should not be uh, the kids of these parents should not be condemned to a failing school. That's the argument for a voucher system in which you would have the option to change at that point. You know, that's being looked at fairly seriously right now.

DD: Well there's a, there was a big thing on the news this morning about schools getting rid of the valedictorian system because it was too competitive and it hurt people's feelings.

DL: I'm not sure I'd agree with that, but-

DD: And, I, I'm on the same page as you. [Both laugh]

DL: Well, yeah, look, the, the, if you want to take away all competition 'cause somebody's feelings are going to be hurt, you, you're not in the real world out there.

DD: They're gonna get-

DL: Well, yeah, I mean that's uh, I don't know where that's comin' from. I heard a discussion on one of the TV talk shows the other night on that, you know, so it's. I, I don't think we're ready for that.

DD: No.

DL: I don't think it would accomplish a lot anyway.

DD: Right, make things worse than it already is.

DL: [Chuckles] Yeah, you got, you wanna, two things, you wanna stri-, encourage kids to strive to be the best if they can. And then if they're not, they'll find ways to try to be better or be the best they can. And as long as p-, parents and people recognize that, that everybody's not gonna be a valedictorian, but give it your best shot. That's what we [Inaudible, overlapping speech]-

DD: [Inaudible, overlapping speech] here instead of here, you're better off.

DL: Yeah. Yep, that's right.

DD: Even if you're not at the top.

DL: Yeah, motivation plays a heck of an important role in, in education. A lot of people end up educating themselves. I had, I'll never forget a column written by uh, Russell Kirk, he's dead and gone now, but he was a great student of education. He was an educator himself, he had Ph.D.s and all the degrees, but he was very down to earth guy. And he said, "Look, this thing of compulsory education is a myth. You can require kids and make it compulsory that they attend, you can't make education compulsory. They're gonna learn if they wanna learn, so let's encourage them to learn some kind of way." And he actually said [Chuckles], "Maybe some kids would, would make it out better if they were out of school working, taking, learning a trade, uh-"

DD: That's why a lot of schools have vocational programs.

DL: You know, that's, that's right. And I think they're beginning to re-, 'cause used to say, you know, as I was growin' up, you can't make it unless you got a college degree. And certainly you want to encourage that by-

DD: Right. [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

DL: For every kid, but not everybody is suited for it, not everybody needs it. And there can be a lot of people who can learn a trade and do quite well in life. You never know.

DD: And there are people that learn trade and make twice as much money as someone with a Ph.D.

DL: Do just as well. And, and, but as long as they to some degree learn how to read well, they use the phonic system basically, and, and uh, and are motivated, and they can teach themselves [Slight pause] more power to them. They can do fine.

DD: Right. I think that's all I have for you today. Um-

DL: It's all [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

DD: Is there anyone else you sh-, could recommend talking to off hand or [Slight pause] about the oil industry and politics in Lafayette?

DL: Uhhh, oh yeah. I, I've engaged in some real interesting discussions on politics with a former state senator, Sonny Moutan, you know him?

DD: Edgar Moutan?

DL: Edgar Moutan.

DD: I have his name, I haven't called him yet.

DL: Yeah, I, I, he's uh, he, particularly at the state-level since he, he served in the legislature for many years, ran for governor, and knows, knows a whole lot about all that stuff, you know. You can get a pretty good little interview with him on that.

DD: Okay. Well we'll definitely give him a call then.

DL: Alright. Twelve twenty already.

DD: Oh really?

DL: I didn't know you'd get that much out of me.

DD: [Chuckles] I think we can possibly get more out of you. [DL laughs] If there's anything else you can think of-

DL: Uh, well, no I can't um…

DD: Um, well if you do, you know, at a later time.

DL: Oh, by the way, I'm just rememberin' the project we called was Vision Lafayette 2000. I couldn't think, that, that's what I was missing, the word "Vision" Lafayette 2000.

DD: Okay.

DL: That was this group of about 500 people who got together back then. So anyway, I missed it in the interview, but uh-

DD: That's okay, I got it on tape now.

DL: Oh, okay. [Chuckles] [Recording turned off]

DD: This wasn't recorded beforehand, but the previous interview was with William Dudley Lastrapes. Conducted on the twenty-fifth of February, 2003 at 11 a.m. in his office.

[END OF RECORDING]