

## Interview With Hugh Fowler

L.B. We are at the State Capitol and the date is December 1, 1994. My name is Lee Bahrych. I am the coordinator of the Colorado Legislative Oral History Library. With me today is Hugh Fowler. Senator Fowler, may I call you Hugh?

H.F. Sure.

L.B. Hugh, would you tell us something about your family history and education?

H.F. Sure. My parents are fairly well educated. My mother, of course, finished high school at a time when not all the ladies finished school, and then she went on to business school in Chicago, and met my father when he employed her as a secretary, and after a couple of years, they got married. How about that. They were married in 1923 and this year they are having their 71<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary which they had just two months ago. They live over in Lakewood Meridian. My father is 97, my mother 92. My father's family were mostly teachers, as far back as we can find when they came here from Scotland. My great grandfather came here on the boat from Scotland arriving about a week before my grandfather. William Kirk Fowler, Jr. was born in New Jersey. William Kirk Fowler grew up mostly around NYC and he was educated at the State Normal College in NY and eventually wound up in Nebraska where some of his brothers had come, around Great Bend, Nebraska. Grandfather was a teacher and then he became a principal of a school in Fremont and then wound up in Blair, Nebraska where he was superintendent of schools starting in about 1892. In 1900 he had built the Blair system into such a good school system that it had kids coming to that school system from all over Nebraska and guess what they brought with them? They brought with them a voucher from their own school district and they lived with people in Blair and it was a large district and while he was there they built a big new high school. He was rather famous for that, although he was not, as you would say, a politician at all. But in 1900, he ran for the state superintendency and was elected and then he was elected for six terms (every two years) as the state superintendent of schools in Nebraska. We have a lot of documentation on it. He was a very effective person working with public education at a time when there were many other things that children were expected to do in Nebraska other than going to school.

L.B. The crops came first.

H.F. Absolutely. His writings about running a school and about his relationship with parents and everything else, were very modern, that is, and if you could read him today, and say, well golly, . Many of those problems are the same problems we have today. My father and his two sisters and brothers were all Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Nebraska and so when he went to work for a math publisher in Chicago, he was pretty well prepared to do that and he worked for that. It was about the only company he ever worked for and he retired from there when he and my mother came to Colorado in 1952. But in the meanwhile, my twin brother, Parker, and I had gone into the Navy in 1943, in

the Navy college training program. The Navy sent us to Boulder, believe it or not, to the ROTC program there, the Navy's ROTC. It started there in 1932, so by 1943 when the V-12 program started, CU was in really good shape to accept more students to enlarge the ROTC unit there, which they did and that's why Parker and I came to Boulder. I had already done 8 months in the Navy program at the University of Wisconsin in Engineering. I was a graduate of Evanston Township High School which competed annually with the township high school in Watseka, Illinois, as the top high school in the country. I was blessed with an absolutely elegant public education in one of the very best schools. That led me to my interest in education when I was commissioned at Boulder and then after the war I went to the South Pacific for a year and I came back from sea duty to Boulder in 1946. Changed my major from Engineering to Business and completed that two years later in 1948 and went to work in Littleton. I've been in business ever since in Denver, one way or another, mostly in advertising, publishing, and sales. I owned my own advertising agency for 20 years and have done some other interesting things. I was recalled to the Navy, to the Navy Reserves in 1951 and did three more years of active duty in the Pacific and in training. I was a turret officer and gunnery officer on a heavy cruiser and spent a year shelling Korea during that war and incidentally being shot at. My first time overseas was not so bad because I wasn't married, I was 19 years old when I was commissioned and so that was a lark. But, then I was recalled and had a family started. I left Shirley there on the dock on North Island, she was pregnant and had chicken pox, and I happened to be the officer in charge of the fantail on this big cruiser waving goodbye. I was about the last guy to wave to anybody goodbye and that was a different order of things; and, of course, being away from my family for a year was difficult. I didn't see my little girl until she was several months old. Anyway, my career in business was interesting, always interesting and always drawing heavily on my own education. I've always felt that it was just lucky that I had such a wonderful high school education because it also made college so much easier and also made it possible to do other things in college that some other people might not have been able to do.

L.B. You had a strong basic education!

H.F. Absolutely. Fundamental education. When I was a Regent of the University in 1983, I carried in my great impatience with the quality of education in Colorado which I had questioned from the beginning. One of the few things I was able to do as a Regent was to get the other Regents to agree that our admission standards for the University would be roughly equivalent to the college board standards at Evanston High School: 4 years of English, 4 years of Math, 2 years of foreign language, 3 years of hard science, 3 years of soft science, and one year of geography. And, of course, the high schools here just really went berserk. They couldn't understand how a University could make it so difficult for kids to get in. Well we did, in five years to do it. I think that there was a surge in the quality there for awhile. I think that they made enough changes; the wimps had taken over and let the barriers down. But, anyway that was a great thing that we did there. So, educationally, I have felt that I had a great advantage in going to good schools and having great teachers.

L.B. Hugh, what made you decide to run for office?

H.F. I'm always uncertain how to answer that question. I was busy in politics. As a layman, as a committeeman as a

L.B. A block worker.

H.F. Yes, as a block worker I had done everything from stamp licking to anything you can imagine in politics. In 1958, we lost a very important election. When I say we, I mean the Republican Party. In 1958 there was an amendment on the ballot to make Colorado a right-to-work state, and the unions spent more money in that election than had ever been spent before by any self-interest group. They were very successful in killing Amendment 1, the right-to-work amendment. But in the process, of course, they wiped out most of the Republican candidates in Arapahoe County where we lived. We lost most of the contests. So at that time I had become acquainted with Jean Tool who owned a local advertising agency and I was in the publishing business in Englewood. So, he was buying some of our publications for his clients. I got to know him through the advertising association and we hit it off pretty well. He asked me if I'd like to be his associate county chairman. He was the County Chairman for the Republicans then in Arapahoe. This was one of the wisest things that any political party ever did. They decided, and I think it was a national thing, not sure they decided that every elected Republican official, not the people in office but the people running the party, each one would reach out and find an associate who was less than 35 years old and do everything with that associate. And it worked great, especially with people like Tool, who took it very seriously and he recruited me to be his assistant and one of the things I was supposed to do was to help him recruit other people. Within a year we had most of our organization duplicated, so we had the old time Republican committeeman and committeewoman, so we were very successful in rebuilding Arapahoe County and for years, course, it was the bastion of Republicanism. Jean illustrated and I wrote a thing called *The Precinct Committeeman's Manual*. There hadn't been one before. We used that extensively in our county and then the state said, well, we could use it to some other counties and they reprinted it as the manual and then it went up to the National Republican Committee. I've seen similar things using our book and my copy, so I know that that made a contribution. I was busy in the party training new people and became secretary someplace along the line and was secretary for many years. In 1968, a couple weeks before our senatorial assembly, Ed Scoot, our Senator Scotty, announced he wasn't going to run for reelection, and we had no candidate. Of course that's one of the things that the party should do is train candidates, make sure you've got people ready. We thought everyone was sure that Ed was going to stay in his seat. He was very popular. There would have been no question about his reelection. So we had no candidate and a couple of funny things happened on the way to the polls. I wound up with a primary. I was asked to run. I wasn't sure I wanted to. I was busy on the Littleton schools trying to do something about the many problems we had there and these people said you could get more done if you're in the Legislature. I said, "Well, O.K." we'll do that and at the last minute another candidate surfaced. So, we had a primary and of course, when that person came out of the bushes all these ladies that were helping me,

and it's the women usually that win the elections for you if you are going to win. They really were angry. I had asked this guy if he wanted to run and he said, "No," and so I said I'll have to, so anyway we had that election, I won and was delivered to the State House.

L.B. How did you feel when you won? I mean, were you elated or were you...

H.F. I think anybody is glad to win. I was very happy to have that other guy run; I mean I had asked him, Tool had asked him, Dwight Hamilton and several other people had asked him.

L.B. Were you apprehensive when you knew you were going to come down to serve?

H.F. I was concerned first about my business. I was really worried about how much time it would take but in those days we were only two years past the time when they met every other year. By the time the crocuses were pushing their little heads through the dirt, most of these guys around here were ready to go home when the wheat began to grow, and the calves started to fall, these guys were ready to come home. They saw to it that ninety days was about it and in that first year I was concerned about the time. But I was very proud to be elected. In all humility I thought I could do a good job. I learned I was one of the few business people here and one of the things I discovered; I think you asked me what was the thing that impressed me the most. I was just dismayed by the condition of the Capitol. I stood there at the back the Senate, the first day. I was proud to be there and it was wonderful to be there with all these important men whose names were known to me, although many of them I didn't know personally. I looked around and it just occurred to me that this was a very dirty place. My Navy training, of course, was that I don't like that. Can't run a ship that way.

L.B. That's right.

H.F. This place was one big butt kick. People discarded cigarettes on the floor, just threw them down, men were still spitting on the floor. The spittoons were gone but they'd only been gone a couple years from both Houses and these guys were still spitting on the rug and the rug itself looked like something out of a Fox Theater that had been in there forty years. Everything had this patina of dirt, the brass was all corroded and the walls hadn't been painted since 1950; and I can remember because that had something to do with that election in 1958, the right-to-work bill, the union situation, you may remember when the painter, the Capitol crew, decided to use rollers to paint the building in 1950 and the union went crazy. They picketed the place, they went on strike, it was really because the Capitol was going to be painted with rollers. Well, they painted it with rollers but they painted it all the same color and it was all gray, deck gray, navy deck gray, and I thought, oh boy, I had enough of navy deck gray. I served on several ships and you feel you should be able to escape that in a building which is basically beautiful as this one and I start to thinking about that, I think on my first day. Of course, there were other things that occurred to me.

L.B. Hugh, what was your ceremony like that first day? I know the Chief Justice came in and swore the members in. Was there pomp and circumstance?

H.F. No, and that's another thing that bothered me about it. I really felt that there should be some and later on I improved that. You may remember that in the Senate anyway, and I think it sort of leaked over to the House, I thought we should have music and we should have band and a really good prayer by somebody who was going to do a good job of that. We should publish it and have a special calendar for that day. Comfort Shaw was the secretary of the Senate. She was wonderful. She just agreed with all these things I wanted to do. I think she had wanted to do some of them also, but many of the things were difficult. The Senate was still setting its journal and calendar in half type in those days and Kimbrough had just changed the House over the year before into cold type, but the Senate was still using hot lead, and it was a terrible process. We had copy readers working until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning; it was ridiculous. That was one of my impressions, also because being in the publishing and advertising business, I knew that there were better ways to do these things, and as I became more familiar with what had to be done, I was able to make some suggestions, and working with Comfort, we finally brought the Senate into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but was hard.

L.B. I worked for Comfort for that one year. I've always appreciated everything she taught me; she was a wonderful lady. Let's go to some of the issues. Can you tell me the first bill you introduced and what happened?

H.F. Well, you know I've been thinking about that, Lee, and I don't remember what it was. I think the first bill I spoke on was one by senator, oh oh, I blocked his name. He later became a Republican from Denver and ran for Congress, anyway, he said, "You're a Presbyterian, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I've got a bill here that's very important to the Presbyterians, because we have a law that relates to the corporate nature of the religious organizations and Presbyterians are organized in a slightly different way. So, actually, the session of a church is acting illegally and we need this law to fix that."

L.B. I see.

H.F. He said, "I'm in the minority and it would be nice if you would help me with this, I'd like you to be the sponsor." I think that was the first act, it was just a couple of sentences long, and they gave me a lot of junk because it was my first bill. I remember that. But one of the first important bills that I really worked on was the narrow gauge act which set up the little train from Antonito to Chama, New Mexico.

L.B. I rode that in the summer and I saw the new house which was halfway to Chama and it had everybody's name on it, and Clarence Quinlan was from that area, he was the representative from that area.

H.F. That's right.

L.B. Beautiful. It's wonderful that that was saved.

- H.F. You knew Sublet, the little town of Sublet along the
- L.B. Yes, they have this wonderful new building there where the train stops and everybody has .....
- H.F. I think that's Osher or Ozier. Yah, that's at . That's a big new building. That is a nice building.
- L.B. I remember some of the debate on the floor that I just felt it was wonderful that that was saved otherwise we would not have it. Now I understand it's the highest narrow gauge railroad that is still running.
- H.F. In the world.
- L.B. In the world.
- H.F. Well, that was important to me. I, uh, Wayne Denny, the Senator from Durango and Cortez came over to me and said, "You're interested in railroads." (I said, yes) "I have this bill that I'm sponsoring with Quinlan in the House to do something about saving the narrow gauge from Alamosa to Durango. I'm very enthusiastic about this, but when I talked to the Chamber of Commerce people at home, they told me that they'll kill me if this thing gets passed because that railroad would be competitive with the Durango Silverton Railroad, which was their big tourist attraction, and has been for years." This narrow gauge line hadn't run since 1957 so they were not at all crazy about having it running again. He said, "I've got to find a new sponsor who will do it." And I said, "Of course, I'd be glad to;" but, I was having my own political problems in the Senate. I was a metropolitan senator but not from Denver, I was from Littleton. The Senate at that time was still largely agricultural, and that meant that some of the things that I was doing, for instance, one of the first things that happened to me I was put on the Water Committee and I was the only metropolitan senator on the Water Committee, and I'm on the committee with all these cowboys and farmers, neat guys, but they had a different view of water than I did. The law is very clear about water and the metropolitan use takes priority over everything else. The agricultural use is, of course, what they were trying to protect. They were very worried about me. My amendment that I wrote, prepared, and got passed on the water bills, Senate Bill 69 codified all water, very, very important. I think we had 50 meetings on that committee.
- L.B. Probably the most important bill that you could carry down here.
- H.F. I went to all the meetings and I learned early that there's an awful lot of wasted time sitting around the meetings with these guys blabbing and talking about stuff that half of it I didn't understand, the other half I didn't agree with. The amendment that I put on said that you can continue to recycle water if you can keep track of it. Now up until that time any recycling efforts that Denver might make by running through the sewage plant and making it fit to drink again, which they do, and then bringing it back and using it for irrigation or anything else, we call, fire and flushing. It was illegal, you couldn't do that,

so this amendment went on and they suffered the amendment. They didn't particularly like it. They didn't understand it. They thought that Denver's sludge was going to be coming out of their faucets in Ft. Morgan. That was important. There were several other important things. But the railroad deal, I got crosswise with Bev Deberard, because I brought my railroad hat down. You know I always tried to wear sort of an Ivy League costume, I just think it's very important for people to be dressed up when they are in the Senate. They've sort of gotten away from that these days. All the Senators used to look very nice. It was part of that mutual respect that we look good. So, she was worried with my Ivy League clothing, I was also wearing this crazy engineer's cap, a denim cap and during the debate, I brought in some slides that I had taken from the air of this whole line and some slides of Alamosa and some slides of the train and other stuff and I brought a slide projector and actually projected it up on the wall. I guess nobody had ever done that before in a Senate Session. I said, you know I'm sorry if you think I'm out of line on this but I don't have enough votes yet and I promised Clarence Quinlan that I'd get this thing passed over here in the Senate. Well, there were a lot of them that were just fooling around with me because I was a rookie. I knew that. I thought eventually they would break down and vote. For awhile we only had 10 or 12 votes and we needed 18, and there were other things about that bill that were very difficult, that probably doesn't belong in this report, but it has to do with some other things that we'll talk about if we get to some of the stained glass windows. Because the narrow gauge railroad was extremely important to Colorado if it hadn't been for narrow gauge railroads, Colorado would probably be a suburb of Albuquerque. I don't know exactly what it would be because the way the State developed the way it was left, the migration to the west went around Colorado. Either it went over us over the Overland route or the Santa Fe Trail and we were left here. The railroad into Denver was an afterthought. The main line went north and so the narrow gauge was very important because it made it clear you could have a good communications and transportation system in these difficult mountains. The guys that built this were all heroes, it was tremendous. We've got to save some of this railroad, it's the one thing, the San Luis Valley, and I'd gotten to know something about the San Luis Valley, because one of my interests was in cloud seeding and working with the farmers down there. We showed them that by the correct timing of cloud seeding we could help them to avoid these terrible hail storms that they have there, that used to wipe out their grain crop, especially their Coors' barley, and that was one of the big crops in the San Luis Valley. The farmers down there over the years had really spoiled most of their agricultural land with their irrigation methods. The sheep business is virtually gone, of course, Clarence Quinlan was a big sheep man, and cattle guy too. But, the cattle business itself is just almost gone; so, I'm making this claim that this railroad as a tourist attraction is going to bring people to the San Luis Valley. Well, that was a big yawn. Many people don't know anything about the San Luis Valley, or care, so, I felt that I had to exert some of my advertising skills and really do a job on this and we needed to get it passed and it has been very successful. Today it is, essentially, the largest source of revenue for the southern San Luis Valley. If it weren't for that railroad, I don't know; but I guess that everybody down there would be on welfare. Today it employs a lot of people.

L.B. Antonito certainly has a lot of people working on that railroad. It's just beautiful, and I thank you. I would not have been on it this summer if you hadn't done this.....

H.F. Great.

L.B. Do you remember the first bill that you got passed through both houses and that the Governor signed, was that the railroad bill?

H.F. No, I think it was the Presbyterian Bill. That had to be done rapidly. Arch Decker is the guy I'm thinking of, Senator Arch Decker, northwest Denver.

L.B. That's right, I remember him.

H.F. Clarence W. Decker, but we all called him Arch; he's the guy who asked me to do that.

L.B. You've told us that one of the major issues you were involved in your years down here was education. Do you think the public was aware of some of the problems in education and the parents that were out there getting their kids ready to go to school, did they understand some of the problems that were going on? I know that Dave Hamil was one of the first members of the House that changed the funding of education.

H.F. That's right. That was fairly late. That was about 1956...

L.B. I believe so.

H.F. Or, maybe it's later than this, 1964.

L.B. He came on in 1938 and served 16 years.

H.F. So that would have been in 1954

L.B. In the early 50's.

H.F. Well, I had the date right.

That particular funding scheme. Of course, was a little different. It provided for a state contribution to the education of each child in school. Basically, that went back, in the 1900's the state contributed 5 cents each, for the children in public schools. .

L.B. 5 cents each school day.

H.F. No, No, 5 cents a year.

L.B. For a year! Oh my.

H.F. Because all education expense was supposed to be local and in those early years, there were hundreds of school districts. In fact, if you look at the original grant from the Federal Government setting up Colorado, one square mile out of 36 was considered a school township and was to be used for school purposes. So, if you look at an early map of Colorado that shows schools, it's a regular pattern in there as black spots. In 1952, the Reorganization Act changed the state school districts from about 1500 to about 200 and it's gotten smaller. Most of the time I was in the Legislature there was 100 – 180



districts. The number is going to be smaller. The Foundation Act, the first school foundation act was actually in about 1970. Les Fowler did that. Les Fowler was from Boulder. He and I were elected the same year in 1968 and he brought in a great interest in education. He had been the Education Committee Chairman in the House for two terms for 4 years. He brought over a lot of experience in that. I brought with me a lot of experience working with the local school board in Littleton and in Englewood. The answer to your question is, do the parents, did the parents share my concern? Yes, a great many of them did and it's interesting that in 1969 that spring when I started in the Senate, we had a meeting, there were 500 people who came to a meeting of the school board in Littleton, raising hell just saying this is

L.B. 500

H.F. Yes, 500 people. It was in the big gym over at the high school. They were very angry and at about 2 o'clock in the morning, the meeting was finally over and most of the people had said, or heard what they wanted to hear; but there were about 100 people left who were interested in a proposal that I made, that we ask the Board of Education to set up what we called a fundamental school. These people later appeared in no, it was a week later over at the other school and we split up into 10 committees, and I chaired the whole committee and we went back to the school board and said this is what we want to do. Will you help us do this? They said well, we're not sure, you'll have to bring us a plan. The administration said we're too busy we can't do this, you'll have to do all the work. I said, well, we're willing to do it, we've got 100 people here, we're willing to do the work. So, six months later we took them back a big plan and it was a complete plan. It included what school would be used, a school they were abandoning, who the principal would be, who the teachers would be, who would drive the buses, who would man the cafeteria, who would do the library, everything. What the curriculum would be, and we were proposing a different curriculum. We were proposing a back to basics 3Rs curriculum which they were abandoning then. See that was a long time ago that's how far back, you asked me, and people have been angry for longer than that. I was angry, my children, Laurie was 6 in 1960 and she was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and I followed her, by 1964 in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I couldn't stand it. I was reviewing her work in one of the best school districts in the state, right, and she was not learning, she was having a good time, and Chuck didn't do a lot better; but, well anyway, we took this thing and the school board turned it down. We almost had a civil war in Littleton. They had one two years ago, election, if you remember, and completely threw out the school board. It took that many years for this thing to fester and finally blow up the way it did there. So people, yes, people were very worried. But you know people turn their children over to the public schools thinking that this is a very responsible organization and these are our treasures, these are our most priceless gifts, our children, and nobody, nobody, would ever abuse them, mentally, physically, of course, they wouldn't. Oh yeah, oh wrong. That's what happened to a whole generation, maybe three generations of children in these schools, they are that bad. Of course, our culture is suffering when we see that all around us. Why are all of these happening? Is it because we have become decivilized; our civilization is failing, and it's because of the schools. The public schools. It is a deliberate thing. It isn't something that's just happened. This was done deliberately,

consciously by people starting in 1905 – 1910, John Daley and his friends, some others, caused it to happen, so somebody has to get up there and say enough, we're going to fix it. I am now today involved in trying to do a charter school exactly the same as the fundamental school that we proposed in 1969, 25 years ago. With any luck, we're going to do it right down there, Kaiser School in Denver. That will be nice.

L.B. Education is always an ongoing issue. Someone told me the other day that they went back and checked the journal, I think it was Ted Strickland yesterday, checked the House and Senate Journal issues of that time and they're almost identical to today, transportation, education, and prison systems, and we're still working with those issues.

Hugh, will you tell me how the committees were handled when you first came here? I heard that we didn't have committee staff until the late 1960's. The committees were just handled; notes were taken by the stenographers. Is that the way it was when you first came?

H.F. No, in my first year, that was the first year that they literally assigned a Legislative Council staff person to your committee.

L.B. To your committee.

H.F. To the committee. Of course, I didn't have a committee until two years. No, that's right, 1970 when I became Chairman of Education and also Chairman of Senate Services. I was also vice chairman of a couple of other committees, Transportation and uh, that came much later. I have always been interested in transportation, railroads, especially. I was trying to get light rail done for a long time, and finally got a bill in pretty good shape and I thought it was going to pass; in my last year, 1979 there was a little misunderstanding there. I won't incriminate anybody but it was probably the worst deal that ever happened to me in the Senate and convinced me that I should get the heck out. That I had served my purpose and I could not....If that bill had passed, it wouldn't have cost the taxpayers any money the way we had it structured, it would have paid for itself through development rights and some other things and today you would be able to take the light rail, instead of this crazy funny thing they've got now. You would be able to take it from Auraria, across town and then straight south to Highlands Ranch. That kind of a light rail, that is the way light rail should be. The lesson of light rail learned throughout the world. People know that's the way it should be. You put light rail where people are and they will use it. So, anyway transportation was interesting to me but the committee was dominated by Jackson and uh...George Jackson and, oh dear, I should have had a list of my fellow senators uh...Norm Olson from Colorado Springs and Jackson, of course, was a trucker.

L.B. Loved to joke.

H.F. Oh, yeah. Jackson. They were both neat, these people are all nice guys, you know, you have differences of opinion with people on both sides of the aisle. But I felt I pretty well got along with most of the people.

L.B. Colorado's very fortunate to have the high caliber of members that we have. I think that in all my years down here, I've never heard of vote trading or vote buying or all of that. I'm very proud of this legislature.

H.F. Well that was.. ah...there's a certain amount of influence that the members try to exert over each other and some of the lobbyists were successful and probably getting more attention than they deserved. But, I guess I had a reputation for being uncompromising and in this game you can't be that way. You really do have to be able to yield, and I just had trouble doing that.

L.B. We always have to keep your word.

H.F. Absolutely, and if you start making too many trades and compromises you can't keep your word. So, I took Abraham Lincoln's advice and that was, what did he say, "Nobody is smart enough to be a successful liar." The one bill that I did make a lot compromises on was the smoking act which I introduced first in 1975. It didn't get very far. It got out of committee, but it was killed on the floor very quickly because the restaurant lobby went after it. I hadn't been able to get the restaurant lobby to do much with it and in the second year in 1976, the restaurant lobby came around because we sat down together and we worked out a deal. The deal was very simple and it just said that a restaurant would have to have a sign saying whether or not they permitted smoking; and if so, where the smoking section was. That's all that was required. That was fine with me because I felt that if they also had to put up their sign at least they had to be thinking about it. They didn't have to provide smoking sections, but if they didn't have a nonsmoking section then they had to put the sign up saying we do not have a nonsmoking section. That was a pretty good crack in the veneer there. People were still, people in my own party hated this. As a matter of fact, some of the people are still really not talking to me because of the Smoking Act. In 1977, we made a lot of other compromises with hospitals and some other people and when it passed finally, Don McManis, my dear friend, Don McManis from Adams County came down to the lectern during the vote, and the senators were then entitled to have a minute when they were voting to explain their vote, and he came down and he said, "Mr. President, Senator Fowler has a reputation in this body for never yielding on anything he doesn't give an inch. He won't compromise with his own mother and look at this Smoking Act, he's made fifty compromises on this bill just to get it through and I object to this. If he's going to be consistent, we should turn this bill down. Help him be consistent. Join me in voting no." So, it barely passed. It was pretty funny. Dear Don, he finally quit smoking, but it still killed him. You know he died several years ago and smoking was right there.

L.B. Now we have a smoking law here in the Capitol.

H.F. We have it all over the state. We have it all over the country. That was the first bill passed in America that controlled smoking in public places. It took three years and it was worth it; and definitely if you asked me which bill I thought was the most important, I think that's the one. I think it not only saved thousands of lives but made life a lot better for millions of people. Smoking is an ugly, unnecessary habit. People who do it, it

isn't a reflection on them as people, but I don't think they realize how bad it is for the others. Well the issue is well behind us. I think the culture has changed and smoking today is seen as something

L.B. Culture has caught up with your bill.

H.F. Yeah. (laughter) I think that's right.

L.B. Hugh, you've seen many changes in state government since you served? Do you think the changes are good or bad?

H.F. They're mostly bad. We need less government not more. The state in many ways has...Colorado is still pretty much a western state, but it isn't as western as it was when I went to the Senate. We felt at that time for one thing, I believe that you could go down to Denver and look over the bills that have been passed and make sure they were working okay; and if somebody's got a pretty good idea, maybe you could adopt a few bills. But not very many, maybe 25 or 30 bills in a year and then go home and live with them. Let the Governor run the place; and if he stumbles and falls, hey, he stumbles and falls. It isn't up to the legislature to run the state. They're legislators, they're policymakers and they shouldn't be trying to be governors, although many of them over the years have wanted to be governors. I feel the tendency, especially, until the amendment passed to limit the session, even that is too long, that amount of time, 120 days. It is too long. It has discouraged the kind of people that you'd like to have up here, discouraged them from running, because it takes too long. Our first years as I said before, we are here about 90 days and for one thing, we were only being paid for 180 days in the biennium that is 180 days for two years. So, these guys knew that if they stayed here much longer than 90 days this year, the first year, the second year they wouldn't get paid for the whole time they were here.

L.B. They got paid something like ten dollars a day. That was about the pay.

H.F. Something like that.

L.B. I remember Palmer Birch at the mike arguing, if you give them more pay, we'll be here 'till July. (chuckles)

If you could change one thing back to the way it used to be, repeal a law or relocate an office.....

H.F. I think the worst, really the one worst thing that happened to change the way the laws were made was the Sunshine Act. That prohibited the caucuses from having secret meetings. Those meetings were so important, we got more good ideas and we controlled more bad ideas which I think is maybe even more important. In a caucus you can stand up and tell some guy that he is, what he is, and what his ideas are worth. But people are unwilling to do that in public, so a lot of this stuff that shouldn't be passed for the last 24 or 25 years, It's gotten through this place because of the Sunshine Act. Which means

that everybody's worried about these microphones right here in this room with us. We didn't have microphones because this stuff wasn't recorded. The idea that people care about that is not true. That's false.

L.B. Didn't you put a sergeant at the doors when you had your caucuses? (Sure) and he kept everybody out and like you said, everybody could bash heads and walk out....

H.F. That's right, and we bashed a lot, and I remember getting back to the education thing in the school finance. Of course, that was one of those issues where most of the senators didn't want anybody to know how dumb they were about school finance. How many senators do you think really understood school finance. We had people proposing bills who didn't know it. I remember standing up at a blackboard, and incidentally, the reason we had chalkboards in these committee rooms and maps of Colorado is because I put them here. I bought the maps, I supplied the maps. We didn't have, can you imagine a legislative committee room of a state that doesn't have a state map in it?

L.B. I knew you used it. I didn't know you were responsible.

H.F. That's right, it has the Fowler name on it right there. Of course, that map is old now and a lot of this, but it's still a really good looking map; it shows the geology, the mountains in relief in color. Jeppesen, as you know, is the guy who they named the building at DIA for Cap Jeppesen. It was his company, but my dad published it, paid for the publishing of it, but Jeppesen's company printed it.

L.B. Is that right. It's used all over the world. It's called the Jep book.

H.F. Yes, anyway, I can remember being at the chalkboard and that's one of the reasons. I couldn't work without a chalkboard; I mean that was part of my business, and doing advertising work and explaining stuff to clients. You've got to be able to put things down graphically. There wasn't a chalkboard in the whole building, so we put these out, the press snickered about that, but it was very important but I can remember, day after day, chalk in hand trying to explain school finance to my pals in the Republican caucus. Trying to get some votes and in 1971 I proposed a really important change, if they'd bought it, it would have really, I think, been great for Colorado. But I couldn't get them to overcome the resistance of the teachers union. The union...very difficult for me I felt as Chairman of the committee. And that's another thing, now with that gavel amendment you have to hear all the bills and you know I ruined a couple suits just carrying around these union education bills that I wouldn't hear. I stuck them in my pocket and that was the end of them.

L.B. Under the gavel, every bill has to have a hearing before the committee and it must be advertised in the calendar or announced at the mike if time is short on the calendar. It's a good thing we have a limit on the bills that can be introduced.

H.F. Yes, it is, that's a good thing.

L.B. I was on the floor the night that, I believe it was a resolution introduced by Rep. Tancredo, and the discussion at the mike was it was unconstitutional and it would never work and all these things and now every state has copied us. We went from I think six bills and then went to 5 or 4.

H.F. 5.

L.B. Because that one year we had 1300, almost 1400 bills. There wasn't any space in the file cabinet for them.

Well, Hugh, tell me what your favorite place in the Capitol is, what memories do you associate with that spot?

H.F. Well, it is kind of hard to say. No, over the years, I got very familiar with the building because of my interest in refurbishing it and I had in my business, I'd gotten to know an interior designer here by the name of Bob Cottle, and he was a very close friend of my business partner, John Moore. As I was looking around at the building, I thought, well, we really do have to have a plan to do something about this. We've got to fix it. So, I asked Bob if he'd come over and he did a quick look at it and said, well it's going to cost this much to do a really good design, because we're going to have to do some research to find out what it looked like originally and to get an idea of what kind of color schemes and things were in the old days. There were some other things that had been changed here that nobody knows anything about, so we got the money out of, we ran the money for that out of our Senate Services Budget, that was called the toilet paper committee, you may remember Ruth Stockton was the chairman and I was her vice chairman, I forget the other member, would have been a Democrat, I don't remember who that was, but whoever it was, was willing to go along with us on it and Bob brought in this sketch arrangement thing and I showed it to Betty Dittimore who was the corresponding chairman in the House and she said, "Gee, we ought to do this together." She said, "I think I can find some money over here." So, we did, we got together on that and we got an appropriation to fix up the Senate Chambers and the House Chambers and some but not all of our offices.

Then the next question was whether we were going to be able to do the rest of the building. That took some doing. The governor had vetoed my bill which had a \$500,000 appropriation in it for doing everything. For \$500,000 bucks, believe it or not, we could have replaced all the window frames, the wooden casements that were rotting, we could have done a complete fix on the electrical and mechanical systems and we could have re-gilded the dome and we had some other things. The press didn't like it. One of the ideas was to glass in a part of the balcony in the Senate and the House so that the press would have all of the electronic stuff they needed but they didn't have to be quiet in there because now they'd have their own quiet room and they wouldn't be bothering the legislators, but it would have meant they couldn't be on the floor. Of course, they hated that. Anyway, this whole thing failed when Governor Lamm vetoed it. He felt because it set up a Capitol Commission and the legislature did dominate the commission, there was no question about that. We saw clearly that other things were going to happen. For

instance, the Supreme Court was moving out, their building was almost finished. They were going to move out and there were some other changes that were happening meaning that the legislature would have more to do with the building than they had before. We felt that the governor had many other places to put stuff, because he had all these divisional offices all over the state and all over the city. He didn't have to have more room in this building.

Well, anyway, he vetoed it so we had to go back to the drawing board on that and his administrative guy, real tall, nice looking fellow, ex-admiral, department administration director for years. Really nice guy, anyway we sat down together and we figured stuff out and by the time we got all the cribbing up there all over the building, the painters were painting, people were saying why do all the paint pails say Department of Transportation on them, no uh, Department of Highways. We didn't have a Department of Transportation then. Department of Highways and I would always say, don't ask because it was being done in an extraordinary way and really like so many things in government, if you don't have the right people working on it, you're never going to get stuff done. The way it turned out, it was beautiful, and I was really glad to have something to do with that.

I mentioned the Supreme Court, they were going to move over to their new building and they announced that they were going to take their chandelier with them out of the Supreme Court. Lee, that was a brouhaha. I told the press that they would have to take me with them. I was going to handcuff myself to the chandelier and if they were going to take it over there, I'd be taken with it. Well that was good stuff in the press for a few days and then Eddie Pringle, Chief Justice, called me and said we really ought to be able to figure out something, don't you think? I said, "Well, I tell you, I got a deal. You leave the chandelier and you can take Justice Steele's stained glass picture. Take that over there and put it in your building." He said, "That's a deal." And then he called the press and he said we're going to take a picture instead of a chandelier.

L.B. That's what happened.

H.F. I really don't think he should have taken either one. There's so many things about, there's no real authority over the building that was the real problem then and in a way it still is although you now have a Capitol Committee.

L.B. We now have the Capitol Advisory Committee. But you cannot change four things in the building. We cannot change the woodwork, the marble, the rose onyx or the brass unless you come to the Committee and then go to Capitol Development. This keeps anyone from sawing through anything or ripping up a floor. You can still paint; you can still move your furniture around.

H.F. I wish I was on the committee because I think I would have done something right. I know that ABA is difficult to deal with but I think what's been done on that is really, really bad. Well you know, leading up to that, I was sitting in the Senate this one day when the Ed Johnson window was installed and dedicated, and this is the window in the

back of the Senate on the west side next to Otto Mears, and the Johnson family was there and it was a nice ceremony; and I'm sitting there thinking, you know, there's only one window left that doesn't have a stained glass window on it and we'd better claim it or the Democrats are going to get it. So, I wrote this letter and I've got a copy of this after talking to some people, I had gone around to some of my friends to see if they wanted to buy a stained glass window to commemorate John Love's governorship. We collected \$10,000 bucks and then I wrote them that letter and said, I talked to enough guys, we have enough votes to get this done if it's okay with you. He said, "Oh, well, I guess it's okay with me, well why not, okay." So, we went to work and we had a little difficulty getting a picture of him, and finally his secretary, what was her name, Dorothy.....

So, Ann Love found me this sort of a Polaroid of him, and I came out with the stained glass people, I actually wound up designing the window which is probably not so good because I'm not an artist. That window has some very important things in it in the detail of the window. On the wall behind him is a little oval picture of Ann Love and on the table next to him there is an elephant to remind everybody that he is a Republican. And then around the side and one of the most important things is a picture of a locomotive and that commemorates the fact that he was on the only narrow gauge railroad commission that was set up for that act to save that railroad down there, and he was on that by law just the same way the governor of New Mexico was for the two states had to cooperate to do that. And he thought it was okay, but Ann Love thought it was terrible. She talked about that ribbon of rust and she just hated that railroad. She thought that something bad was going to happen down there and her husband would be held responsible for it or something. But, I was always very glad about that and I think John Love liked his term as chairman of that commission and he always felt that the railroad was a good thing.

When I told Pringle a couple of years later, said, you can have that stained glass window, I had something in mind because I had a business partner by the name of Hamilton Gregg whose great, great grandfather was chairman of the second or third territorial governor of Colorado and he was one of the few people who could talk to Chief Ouray and he was called the peacemaker for that reason, and made peace with the Ute Indians and came with great stress in I think it was 1863, and he was, later than that, 1879, he was General Palmer's surveyor, and he surveyed the right-of-way for the narrow gauge line from Denver to Silverton and named many of the communities like Alamosa, Monte Vista, Poncha Springs, and many of those towns down there. And Palmer would not normally take his railroad into an existing town. He wanted to set up a town where he could control the real estate. For instance, Antonito was a mile from Conejos. Conejos is the county seat of Conejos County. But the railroad went through Antonito which was a brand new town. Just like Colorado Springs, he did the same thing and avoided Colorado City. So, here is the surveyor, Alexander Cameron Hunt who was really a good governor and was a very sensitive man. So, I designed that window also. It was built in Boulder and in that window you see Hunt and Ouray with a peace pipe both standing there and then some little stuff around the outside, but across the back you see the narrow railroad puffing along on its tracks and in the foreground his transit, his surveyor's tools. So, I had that in mind that we would have a window for Governor Hunt and my ex-partner Ham Gregg who died several years ago. He was a native of Denver, although he didn't



live here very much, he was always proud to be a Coloradan and he paid for that window. That window, incidentally, stimulated a whole bunch of others as you may remember. It was there by itself about two years and then other people started worrying about windows, and all of a sudden, (chuckles) we had more windows than we could think.

L.B. I think the Love window was the first window since 1925. Something like that; it was a long time, a long period where there weren't any windows....

H.F. The two ladies' windows were the first since early, Virginia Blue and Emily Griffiths.

L.B. That's right.

H.F. The Blue window and the Griffiths windows are gorgeous. Beautiful, beautiful stained glass windows. But they were in and where the Love window is now was the only one available. So we put John Love in there and then started looking around. Several years later, Elizabeth Kinney, I think her name was, came to me and said, "Do you know, we don't have any big window commemorating minority legislators and there is a very important one who was one of the first Republicans in Colorado and he was the Speaker of the House and he was black, and his name was Barney Ford. He ran a big hotel in Cheyenne and another one in Denver and he was a very famous man here, and we should have a window for him. So, I worked with her, she finally got the money together for it and then I helped her build the window and that is the one that is in the House.

L.B. Yes, it is the one that is by the Speaker's podium.

Hugh, one of my last questions I want to ask you about the attitude of people, the voters, the citizens, they seem to be more pessimistic, skeptical and even cynical about government, politics and politicians than they used to be. Do you think that is a true perception?

H.F. Yes. It is true.

L.B. Why do you think this is so?

H.F. Well, I think many of the people who are elected to office don't understand exactly what they are supposed to be doing. They have a strange idea of the power, for instance, of an elected legislator to change the world. I think that is very normal, but in our country where we have a deliberative process to arrive at the decisions to do these things, it is very important for the parties to understand what the limits on them will be. I felt that most of the bills that I produced, for one thing, I have always been a writer, so I had a large part in writing my own legislation. I felt that what I was suggesting were really good ideas. For one thing, I didn't feel I had time to waste. The only time in my life that my palms have sweated was the 12 years I was here; and the day that I was no longer here, my hands went back again to being dry, which was quite a thing. And that was because I was jealous of the time that I was here. I knew my business needed me, needed me constantly, and I was in the personal service business and my clients didn't care that

much about my legislative career; they wanted me to be doing ads for them and doing their marketing and helping them make their businesses successful. So, I was always worried about that. So people who were wasting my time in those committee meetings that were interminable and dumb things being said just to the press and all that. I was so impatient with that and I still would be, I'm sure. If I wanted to be here, I think I could be. I don't want to be here.

I think the kind of people changed somewhat. The idea of Palmer Birch probably wasn't wrong. A number of the people I know who came into the thing when I was still here were making \$16,000, \$17,000 and that maybe more than they could make outside, I'm not sure of that but it appeared to me that that would be true. It just encourages a lot of people to be here for the wrong reason. Philosophically, I got along with people like Jefferson who were so strong about the idea that volunteerism and a free nation. That if people have to be paid to serve the people there is something wrong. Those were the people who are willing to pay somebody else to do it and the people who are willing to take their money to do it. And I think we see this resentment, most of the resentment toward elected people starts with the Congress of the U.S. The press has been relentless in criticizing them, but they do dumb things. And they deserve the criticism. I hope the election a couple of weeks ago changes that. It is yet to be shown that Republicans are more responsible. But I think that's a big part of it. The people have figured out how to get elected to government and how to stay in office and it's a subversion of the process. But, there are a lot of things about it. I remember when my good friend Carl Williams was elected the same time I was, after 4 years he quit because his family came under a lot of stress. He was a very wealthy man and he thought his family was endangered, and a lot of that was because of the Sunshine Act. He felt that things he was interested in, he couldn't discuss in public. It would be one thing to be discussing them with his friends in caucus and you didn't discuss things outside of caucus. That was just a no, no. People who did that we shut off. And they weren't included in subsequent conversations. I think that we see, and it's a disastrous thing, but a lot of it goes right back to education, Lee, the thing we talked about earlier. We got two generations of people who don't understand our government, they don't know how it is supposed to run, and they are not being educated to feel that they need to serve their fellowman and this is one way to do it. And they don't have to be paid to do it. They shouldn't be. May be expenses, of course, but other things than that....

You asked me about favorite places, I'd say the whole, I got to know this building intimately and I used to take people on tours, that KVOD thing, I used to sell tours of the building with a little lunch for \$25 and I'd spring for the lunch and we'd eat out here in the lounge and we had to limit that as we started getting too many people. I especially enjoyed taking them down through the building, to the basement, and the tunnels around and over to the museum. I got to know the building from top to bottom, including the attic, and all the good stuff up there, the fact that there are a couple of funny little tin houses over both of the chambers that very few people have ever seen, but in the early days, they were the top of the chambers themselves and there was a skylight open to the outside there and those things were painted in such a way to look like very fussy plaster work. Of course, they weren't. They were just painted.

L.B. Pressed tin.

H.F. Pressed tin. Beautiful job.

L.B. I wish it would be open again. Sometime in years to come, I hope that can be open. It's very dangerous though up there. There is a lot of the construction of the ceilings there.

H.F. It's very dangerous. I can remember the day when the workman was up there doing something with the electrical thing, and as we were talking, his leg came right through, that's tile in between the girders. There is a little apian arch when the tile is set in there and, of course, over the years, a lot of the metal mortar has just gotten crumbly and he went right through and I reached for him and grabbed him and he said, "You know, somebody told me I shouldn't do that." I said, "Yeah, that was me. I told you, "Walk wherever these girders are. Don't walk in between these girders because it won't support you." Well, the word got out and nobody else went through the ceiling

L.B. I will tell you, Hugh, that about two months before Bob Cottle died, he came to the Capitol and came into my office upstairs and he had a newspaper reporter with him. He was showing her the Capitol, and he turned to me and said.....He did the outside painting in the hall in 1972, so we were talking about 1972, almost 17 years later and it was still beautiful, and he said, "I've always felt this was my legacy to the citizens of Colorado." Then he died a couple of months later. I used to walk into the building and I remembered Bob Cottle said this is his legacy to all of us. And he was so proud of it. It is simply beautiful.

H.F. He did a marvelous job.

L.B. He really did.

H.F. A real sensitive guy, a really good guy. I had had him do our church the year before and he came and did a super job there and the church is still beautiful. Although one of the things he did that was different was to put in a red carpet in this little Presbyterian tiny little church down in Littleton at Windermere and Littleton Boulevard. A beautiful building, with heavy oak beams and stuff, and this red carpet was marvelous. It was just gorgeous. We only lost 200 members because of that red carpet. They just couldn't stand it. But it did set off that room so beautifully and Bob used to take people down there to show them what you could do to jazz up a tired old building.

L.B. When I was redecorating part of the Speaker's office, he came down to help me with the draperies and he helped with the chairs in my office and just always such a kind man. It was very sad when he died. I still think of him when I enter this building.

H.F. Well, we need to put a plaque up someplace about that so that his name doesn't disappear.

L.B. You know, the benches all over the Capitol, we could put his name on a bench. We would have to go to the Advisory Committee and get an okay on that. I would certainly be very willing to work on that.

Well, Hugh, do you have any stories about members or staff that you would like to end this interview with?

H.F. (chuckles) Well, I grew to love really a lot of people down here. I felt when I came that there were some people on staff that probably there were other people that could do the work better and I suppose that in the early days, because I did make a lot of changes in our senate staff, and that was difficult. The process itself, it is a deliberative process as I said before, so that means that there are some funny things being done that aren't done other places, but necessary to do that. But that doesn't mean you can't use modern technology to get it done. So a lot of the work that used to be done, that was repetitive, redundant, and really unnecessary and as we corrected those things, the staff obviously had to change. I talked the person who was the head in the senate in making those changes and getting the senate to go along, sometimes it was very difficult. But the people were always great. Comfort Shaw just did a great job. For many years I hired most of our staff in the senate. Marjorie Rudenbeck was really, I thought, an excellent person who had very high standards. We had a great group of people. I was always, and still am, concerned about the senators themselves do not dig how hard some of that work is and they don't know how hard these people are working and they should take some time to be alert to the process itself and to know exactly what is happening so that when they make these requests for certain things that are really outrageous that require a lot of extra work, they just think that it is something that can be done, not realizing that someone is going to miss an evening with their family or something like that because of it. Those are things that you would like to fix if I were still Chairman of Senate Services, they wouldn't do that. (chuckles)

But my experience here, other than frustrations and not being able to get important things done, and I wasn't that successful as a legislator and you wonder how I could spend 12 years at it if I felt that way; and in reflection, I don't know how I did because I lost one business as a result of it, I think, and it made other businesses difficult. Until the end I felt that I really could do something. But in that last year I lost the light rail bill and I lost my higher education reorganization act, I had spent five years writing that, and I'm still certain that it would have improved education in Colorado. It lost by one vote when a guy changed his vote at the last minute and that was the kind of disappointment that is....but generally, it is a wonderful process, there are some really neat people. My memories now. You know you always remember the good stuff, and I do remember a lot of good stuff. I'm glad I did it. I hope everybody feels as good about it as I do. I wish the people of Colorado knew more about their government and perhaps if I'm successful with my present educational activities, the children will grow up knowing more about it and appreciate it more and be better citizens.

L.B. Well, Hugh, thank you very much for your time today.

H.F. I appreciate being here.