

Interview with: Susanne Wilson
Interview by: Danelle Moon
Transcriber: Jeffra Bussmann and Trista Raezer
[Interview #6]
[Wilson Interview 6.wav]

[1:22:34] at beginning {start at [00:00]}

Moon:

My name is Danelle Moon. I am the director of San Jose State University Special Collections and Archives. Today is August 14, 2006 and I am at Susanne Wilson's house in San Jose, California. We are starting our sixth interview.

Let's refocus actually on the jail note issue that has that wonderful image of you and Zoe and Dianne on the front cover of Glenna Matthew's book on the history of women in the Silicon Valley, which is wonderful that you guys got such, you know, good press from her. So, I thought maybe we could just go back and talk a little bit about that incident and talk about the lawsuit and what you thought about the judges' decision and all the players involved.

Wilson:

Well, there were so many different agendas working _____?? and you're never quite sure what the press gets them but it started out with the lawsuit that the old jail was inhumane and that it was disaster. We had a fight with Winter(??) over the jail, who was the sheriff, because he blamed the supervisors, and then they assigned a master to supervise this jail lawsuit. And then we started trying to build a new jail but even before that there was this constant battle and we never quite knew where our sheriff was going to be, as far as being in the middle of it, because such things as the judge would go in and tour the jail and saw that the sheets were totally inadequate, and so he told the county to go to Macy's and buy sheets for the jail inmates.

Moon:

Oh, like the linen sheets were so awful.

Wilson:

Yeah, uh the sheets for the beds, and we tried to explain – Winter tried to explain that we bought - had to buy industrial sheets, that these sheets at Macy's wouldn't last through a week of the laundry and the different things at the industrial laundry and he said, uh, and so he was going to find the same thing at Tempest(??) Court(??), and, our(or hire??) attorney(??) in contempt of Court, if he didn't go do it, so, uh, sheriff was attorney, so _____?? he just told him to do it or I'm gonna go to Macy's myself and buy the sheets. So it was just that kind of relationship with the judge from the start. The master cost us thousands and thousands of dollars when we were trying to find a solution to the jail and finding out where we were going to build the new jail because we had to, not only do the environmental impact report, we also had to get the permission of the city because while we could have done it, but we had an agreement with the city and to just plop a new jail

next to something they thought other cities should have, bear the burden of having a jail. Sure they wanted it there, the county, so we had to solve a lot of problems that were political, financial - to even get the money to build a new jail, and we finally got it off the ground at the same time costing us thousands of dollars for the master to be telling us what to do and overseeing for the judge what we were doing. So at that point, the judge, after we started building the jail, the judge got drifts(??) that it was going so slowly and hauled us back into court, and we had Alan Ruby as our attorney, a private attorney we had overseeing us and so then we started a court case on the jail and he said that we were not responding fast enough for the building of this jail.

Moon:

The judge said that?

Wilson:

Yes. And that there was also more interplay there because at the same time, we had dismissed our county public defender. I don't know whether you read in there.

Moon:

Oh yeah, I did see that.

Wilson:

So that Vacon(Avakian??) was a friend of the public defender and the public defender is always on the side of the people who were in jail or incarcerated and are innocent as far the public defender is concerned. Vacon was a very liberal democratic judge who had been in Oakland, he was very liberal towards the clients who were in the jail, the prisoners. So that he was just very antagonistic, but he was also antagonistic towards the board, although he would never admit it. The fact is that we fired Shelly Portman and we had a right to fire him because he was an at large employee. There is a long history there, too. Our county exec(??) had always hired and fired the public defender. He was not a part of the _____(??), the people the board selected and hired. Shelly Portman had worked very hard, he wanted to be, he felt like he would be better off if he had the Board of Supervisors hiring him ____ (??) because he thought could manipulate them better, get what he wanted for the public defender's office. He was a renowned public defender throughout the state and did all kinds of national writings. So that there was a following for him. So that at one point, Vacon even waived this letter that we had very carefully had written on his dismissal as to why he was going to be dismissed. He even brought that up in the lawsuit, the ____ (??) judge did.

Moon:

Really? The judge did?

Wilson:

Yes, it was a very famous letter. And actually my staff had worked, Bob Robstein, you can probably talk to Bob Robstein about this, had used a word, used words very carefully, and he, of course, consulted with the attorneys when we wrote this letter to Shelly Portman. And I had signed the letter as the chair of the board. So this letter, at one point

when I am on the stand, he, and I can't - I don't have the letter in front of me, but what the judge wanted to know, "What did you mean when you said such and such a word?" It was very obvious what the word meant but he was trying to, "what was your - really did you mean?" And I said, "Well, if you look it up in the dictionary, you know, it means this." He didn't like that answer. So everything he did was very antagonistic when we were on the stand. He wanted - he had determined that he wanted us to build geodesic domes out at the jail farms because he read in Montana, he had been doing a lot of reading on how you can build jails speedily, so that the prisoners didn't suffer. So he wanted us to build the tent-geodesic domes, tents out at the jail farm. We tried to explain, and our attorney tried to explain, that the EIR that would have to be written for those geodesic domes to follow the state law. By the time, the EIR was written and passed, and passed muster the new jail would be completed. It would take at least two years to get an EIR through the system, the state correctional system, the whole system, and that we wouldn't do it. And at that, he said, "You are not putting geodesic domes out there?" We said, "No, it would be a waste of the tax payers' money and it couldn't be done and the new jail would be finished." So with those words, he found us in contempt of court because we defied him and told him no.

Moon:

And it was mainly over those domes, then, that he—

Wilson:

Yes, it was over those domes.

Moon:

Oh, okay.

Wilson:

He wanted us to build tent domes out at the jail farm and we told him, No. That it was financially, um, what is the word? That it would be a misuse of the taxpayers' money to build those, to even try to start the process of building those domes, and we would not vote...

Moon:

So would the domes just have been a temporary solution? Was that the idea?

Wilson:

Yes.

Moon:

Oh.

Wilson:

A very ___(??) solution for while the jail was being completed and we told him that the jail would be completed before we would get the geodesic domes approved so that we could build them because we were not going to break the state law. And we were not

going to break environmental laws and that we couldn't do it, and therefore, we wouldn't do it. We would not vote to do it. We made that decision and we were prepared for his finding because he had already threatened that he would find us in contempt of court. And indeed he did. Well, that whole issue of the jail and then it took, you know, we went to the appeal court and then, the superior court, lost there. At the superior court, Vacon appealed it to the Supreme Court in California. At the Supreme Court, we won and he didn't pursue it any farther than that. But underlying all of this there was a - board of supervisors were very unhappy with the way that the sheriff managed the jail, not managed his budget and every year there was always a budget overrun. With the new jail coming on, there was going to be a hiring of new officers and the cost was going to be astronomical and looking at the cost of the new jail and we were so unhappy with Winter and we - he had made an - come to the supervisor meeting, talked with them, we talked into having correctional officers as opposed to peace officers and that he agreed that that was the way to cut the cost and bring his budget inline. But when faced with his police union, he agreed to us, you know when we're talking about agreeing with me, when we're talking about yes, you could bring it before the board, yes, I will sign off on it, yes, that we should have correctional officers, then turn right around and go to his union and then come back and actually refuse to do it. So there was no way that we could lessen the cost of what it was going to cost to run that new jail. You know it was going to be tremendous on our new budget that it became a matter of whether we were going to change the constitution, take the jail away from the sheriff, and have it run by the board of supervisors. They'd take the whole correctional facilities away from the sheriff, not his patrol, but the facilities, which meant Elmwood and the jail.

Moon:

Okay.

Wilson:

Of course that created a big battle and so we ___(??) worked out what we had to do, we'd have to get a permission change in charter from the citizens of the Santa Clara County to have the supervisors in charge of the jail system. And that we would - and also, that we would have correctional officers and they would be paid 15% less than the police officers.

Moon:

Oh, okay, that's why the union was upset.

Wilson:

Oh, yeah, because they envisioned the whole ___(??). Since Prop 13, the sheriff's department was a dead-end job, it wasn't enlarging because we had also - in the 70s, the county had stopped doing any development in the county, that was an urban, it was an urban environment that urban development belonged in the cities, so therefore the sheriff's department did not grow. In fact, it was stagnating because as the city was expanding, there were more cops but fewer deputy sheriffs. And with the budget of Prop 13 budget, there was no longer property taxes, could not increase their numbers, or could not increase their promotions, so they - frankly the deputy sheriffs would move from being a deputy sheriff to city departments and it was - so they saw the new jail as a new

way to expand and grow. There would be more sergeants and more captains and better pay. So that was why it was a real battle. It was a battle of money and prestige, and that police officers carry guns and they were saying correctional officers do not. Therefore, you had to have police officers in there because the jails were so dangerous that there had to be. And so we voted to put it on the ballot and when we voted to put it on the ballot, by that point there were just four, I think, on the counsel at the time. And the three women, uh maybe there were still five there, but one of them voted against it. And so, we just, and the other person was Tom Legan(?). We decided to leave him out of it, that we three women ran the campaign and hired the consultant and raised the money. We had a fundraising out at Winchester Mystery House, raised the money and hired the consultant and came up with our campaign.

Well, what the sheriff really used the campaign ___(?), we've got to protect you citizens, we've got to have guns and we've got to stay there and protect you citizens and keep these prisoners in the jail. What they didn't understand was that the public didn't care what you did with prisoners once they were in the jail, they were bad guys, and so be it if they rotted and slept three deep. They didn't care. And so their campaign was, you know, to protect the citizens from these people who were already in jail, and we ran a campaign that was very clever and you saw with the brochure that it was a [shuffling of papers]. There were several good brochures. The picture of saying that the three supervisors take a look at the issue from our point of view and here are all these bright looking women, sitting in their seats of power, saying, "Yeah, we can do a good job of running this county." And we won! We won. We were responsible for balancing the county budget and deciding spending priorities. We had to keep our budgets balanced and our county bond rating at the top. For four years, the sheriff has overspent is budget by millions of dollars. We'd increase his budget, and he'd just spend more. And the public, here we were being the prudent, responsible supervisors trying our best to reign in this cowboy of a sheriff. That's what he was. [laughter] In his campaign, he had cowboy hats and boots and his horse and all that because he was a horseman. We had the facts on our side, and we won. We ended up owning the jails, and the county sheriff's department has fumed and fussed ever since. Even with Laura Smith, who was elected the next sheriff, even she has tried to create schemes of taking jails back, and some of the other supervisors today would have given the jails back, but when it comes to that point of the supervisors' worrying(?) to give the jails back, somebody comes along and reminds him, you gotta take it to the people because it was a charter change and the people gave the sheriff, uh, the jails, uh ...

Moon:

To the board.

Wilson:

... to the board of supervisors and we are, uh, we could prove, you know ___(?) that in most of the counties that's the way it's run. It's not run by the sheriff. So we took away the sheriff's power and he felt like we had really cut him to pieces. So they've always had a battle to get their jails back.

Moon:

Who did the sheriffs have to justify a report to before that process took place, was it to the board?

Wilson:

To the board.

Moon:

Oh, okay.

Wilson:

But he would spend his money and he would have overtime and at this point, you got to pay the salary and we couldn't, each year he would have a scheme to do a better job, he was gonna do this, always something came up, so they had a system of overtime in the sheriff's department was, uh, the system, they could make well over \$50,000 more than their salaries if they were clever. The sheriff didn't mind and they, he wasn't a good manager. The system manager could manage the sheriff's department better. He would have been better.

Moon:

So, did you, there was a lot of consensus, it sounds like, between the board of supervisors and the county management on that?

Wilson:

Yes, yes.

Moon:

Okay.

Wilson:

Yes, and they could supply us with the figures, which we'd asked for and they would get to us, that we needed to prove our point. The three supervisors, Dianne McKenna, Zoe Lofgren, and myself, we were all three very popular. All three had won our elections and had kept being reelected. The public believed in us.

Moon:

Right.

Wilson:

We got the support of the newspapers and we had our campaign that was absolutely great. And it was fun! [laughter] Yeah, it was fun.

Moon:

Now, was that um, I know when I spoke with Dianne McKenna about that, she reflected on that as being one of her most fond memories in the work she did on the supervisor's, on the board of supervisors. It's a great example of showing how women were actually in

control power-wise in that level of politics but as well as kind of showing kind of the, I don't know if you describe it as a sisterhood, in a way ...

Wilson:

I would.

Moon:

You would?

Wilson:

Yes, I would, that we enjoyed working together and I don't want to say skinnied(??) together, I'd rather say, consulting with each other to find the best way to present our picture and to present our side of the issue. Anybody who has ran several campaigns, Dianne had been the mayor of Sunnyvale, Zoe had been very involved in work for Don Edwards in Washington, so we loved politics, yeah. It was just a good political issue and we just ate it up. [laughter] It was, we also knew it was the right thing to do. So it was something that was a bonding experience for us.

Moon:

And were there other moments like that on the board that you had with the three women that was like that?

Wilson:

Well, you know, I always had a very good relationship with Becky Morgan(??) also, and Gerry Steinberg before that because when Gerry and I were there, there were just the two of us. Gerry, I had known her when I was on the city counsel, so there was always a feeling of understanding each other. Knowing that we faced problems that the men didn't, or as we called them sometimes the boys, on the board of supervisors and I'm not sure they called us the girls, but we called them the boys, and as we sometimes seemed to get something through that we wanted to get done. So all three knew how to use power and weren't afraid to use power. We had different styles. Dianne was very explosive and emotional, particularly in executive sections. She would just be ready to go for the throat of whatever the issue was. Zoe was the legal beagle. I could always depend on Zoe to read every, every inch of a brief and know what it was so that, I hope they will forgive me if I say that, finally at the end of the day when it was an explosive issue, I was expected to bring a consensus and get everybody calmed down, and let's find a common sense answer to whatever the problem was we were facing. None of us wanted to be on the wrong side of an issue with the other one. Just as with the Shelly Portman issue, I might have disagreed with some of the ways some of it was done, but I'd never express that disagreement because I was sticking(??). Zoe was the one who was very dissatisfied with Shelly Portman but I would never have said anything that would have weakened our case because we stuck together. Shelly did have an excellent attorney, who's a friend of mine and also Jim McManis and he did get a million dollars out of the county for —

Moon:

Oh, he did? For wrongful termination?

Wilson:

—wrongful termination. What was so funny to us, Dan McCartendale(?) was on the board when Shelly wanted us to put it on the ballot that he'd report to the Board of Supervisors, not the county exec. He did not like our county exec., Bill Segal (?), at the time. Dan McCarten(?) set up ___(?) with Shelly. You know, you ought to beware of what you wish for. [laughter] We might not —

Moon:

Be careful what you wish for.

Wilson:

Be careful what you wish for because the board might not be as easy as you think it's going to be.

Moon:

And apparently that turned out to be—

Wilson:

And it turned out to be true, be careful what you wish for. Because he thought he could really run the board. And he couldn't. The board had a mind of its own.

Moon:

So how do you think, in retrospect, how the moving the jail system from the sheriff's oversight to the board of supervisors? Is it a more efficient financial program than it was previous to that to that time?

Wilson:

It did what it was supposed to do. It paid fifteen percent less than peace officers and there is no way around that. You know you can raise a very ___(?) with police officers because the sheriffs, because they want the sheriffs to have their great pay raise, so that they can get their raises. So that they ended up in an alliance and they worked and they liked it now, they were very content, it was a very _____(?) were a mixed minority classes like you've never seen in a sheriffs department. We had people coming and being able to qualify that couldn't have passed the sheriffs peace officer test. They really were correctional officers who had lower positions in terms of —

Moon:

Requirements?

Wilson:

— dangers and requirements of what they, the peace officers were, so that the system worked. They always claimed it didn't but the proof was in the fact of the budget that they were, it was and the pay was 15% less. You can't get around a 15% saving. You know, there's no way around it. So that yes, as ___(?) go, it has caused a mess in the department and I think that some of the board's members later would just as soon turn it over because they were, Lawrence(?) Smith would argue, "Well I'm a confident

manager and I can manage this and manage it well and I think you should change it.” To get a majority of the board who says, “oh yeah, we’d be willing to change it,” but then you got to face the voters. And so why do you want to change it when it is a 15 percent savings? There’s no need for the correctional officers to carry a gun. So you have some sheriffs have a job where they wear a gun so you have a police officer, uh sheriff being able to transport has to be the sheriffs department because they can carry a gun. So there are times when the correctional officers and the sheriffs department interface. I’ve called it police officers very often in my conversations but it’s really the sheriff’s, the sheriff’s deputies I should be saying. So that it re-created(??) probably in those positions maybe a little more but not really because the sheriffs were doing that anyway so that was just a cost that was always there no matter which department you put it in.

Moon:

Now in reflection on all the work that you did at the Board of Supervisors, outside of the jail kind of controversy that took place between the first lawsuit with the, you know, contempt of court issue about the actual jail building itself to the actual kind of implementation of changing that whole process, what other issues did you work on that you thought were as exciting or as significant that you were involved with as a chair and a supervisor?

Wilson:

I think when you look at the county as a whole, one of the most important functions that we do are the health care for the individuals living in this county. And that is a whole slew of programs, starting with the mental health and the care of the mental health and the boarding care issue in downtown and the people that really need help and trying to create in a time of tight budgets, trying to keep safe places for those who really needed to be in a hospital environment, locked facilities(??) they’re called, get them built, and how you take care of them. The alcoholic programs and the drug programs, and the alcoholic programs when I first became a supervisor was \$5 million. It just escalated but we had methadone programs that you know, methadone, heroin users would go and get a methadone shot once a week of whatever it was to stay sober, to stay drug free, from heroin. And the, that whole, and then of course, the valley medical center, who when I became a supervisor was un-auditable and there was a person that ran the whole hospitable system that was really at the beck and call of the doctors who, the doctors who believed that only a doctor could be the head of a hospital system, not just a man with a, without being a medical doctor, and that was an issue when I was first elected and I became chair of the audit committee. And Bob (Sillon??) came on in 1980 to uh, Bill Segal hired Bob Sillon after in city nine(??) the present, the woman who was running the hospital, Yvonne, decided she needed to move on. She just, this board was not going to be one who tolerates much of the things that were happening over there, particularly, this particular supervisor and her chief of staff, Bob Bronstein(??), who were really watching what was happening over there. And then studying what was happening at the hospital. When I first became the chair of the audit committee, it took, after Bob Sillon was there, three years more, that was the first audit that that hospital had in about at least ten years.

Moon:

Why was that?

Wilson:

Their records were so messed up. They didn't keep decent records, they didn't keep decent anything over there. It was just chaos. They just didn't seem to think that a hospital could be audited. And she had sought, hired a man, a consulting firm to run the hospital for at \$60,000 a month. She was paying over, being paid over \$100,000. That was, the board couldn't talk to the consulting firm. And so when Bill's, I called to make an appointment to talk with this guy, who was over there running the hospital, and he called back to say that he couldn't meet with me. And that he could only meet with Bill Segal. And you know, I could meet with Yvonne. So I went to Bill Segal, and I said, "Bill, I'm going to bring this up at the Board because if I can't talk to the guy who's running this hospital and I'm supposed to be the chair of the joint conference committee," I said, "I need to bring up to the Board and have the Board direct you to have him talk to me." Bill Segal said, "Don't do that yet and let me see what I can do." The next day I got a call from the guy saying, "You can have lunch with us." My aid and myself. And you know that's following the channels, you know. I worked with the county executive, I couldn't order him to meet with me, but I could certainly as a policy to the board, the board would have voted five-yes that I needed to meet with him. All I wanted to do was find out what was happening with the hospital since he was running it at \$60,000. That was in the Spring and his contract was up. And he was, had decided he was going to go for an extension on his contract. By the time that that contract was coming up, he decided to bow out, not return.

Moon:

Do you remember what year that was?

Wilson:

That would have been the end of '79.

Moon:

'79, oh, okay.

Wilson:

Yeah, early on.

Moon:

Early on in your career.

Wilson:

In my career, the first year actually. I ran in '78 and this was all happening in the first year. So some of it was, you know, over a couple of years but that was early on. And we were also already beginning to feel the effects of Prop 13, and budgets were critical. When I became the chair of the board, was that '82 when we laid off a thousand people, and then we all cried. You know that was a horrible time for us to lay off a thousand people when the services were so critical but back to the, back to where our one meeting

with the consultant which I think helped him decide that he didn't want to work with us anymore. He didn't know it but at the time his secretary was a very close friend of my chief of staff, Bob Bronstein. So we knew what was happening over in his department because we would get answers in other ways. But he came back from his luncheon and I have to say that as you can hear my voice is a Texas Southern voice, soft-spoken. Bob Bronstein is from the Bronx, a Jewish guy from the Bronx. And his voice is New York and sharp and asks questions like that, as quick as he can be, and of course, you've got to answer him. Any way your answer is if you don't tell truth, you're caught. So he came back, he told his secretary, he called us "the odd couple." You know so different in our style and he couldn't figure us out. _____(??) Part of my odd couple ____ (??). But, uh, so that we established though even though we had the bad times with the budget and the hospital has always been in critical condition, we established an open-door policy that no one would be turned away from our hospital. That was critical. You didn't have to ask any questions, you just had to come to our door, and you'd be treated. Questions would be asked later about you, and we would ask if you had any hospitalization ____ (??). We've always been the hospital of last resort, and we've had to work hard to keep other hospitals from _____(??) when the person shows up at the emergency. And if you ask for if they've had any hospitalization and turn them away, so that they can't turn them away if it is an emergency. And so that sometimes quick as they can they'd get them off their hands, and get them to the Valley Medical Center. This was part of the whole system. Bob Sillon, was, is a ferocious tiger for his cause and for his hospital. He literally because he did everything that they board wanted him to do and he would say it was the Board of Supervisors did what he dreams because he couldn't have done it without us, which is true. We were a good team. And so that the hospital system became stronger and became respected in the community and is today still respected for what it does. We have the most modern hospital in the county with the new hospital. It was built after I left, you know, I saw the blueprint of building the hospital before I left but by the time it was finally built was after I had left. It was about two years after I was gone it finally. It was very controversial to build it because they needed it and I think, Ron Gonzales was against it. And I'm not sure that Dianne was or not but it was, it was a shaky vote to finally build it because the Mercury News was doubting the intent of doing it and it wasn't a popular decision. At the time like some people said it was going to because the other hospitals were saying it was a waste because they had their hospital beds, you know. But they didn't really want our patients.

Moon:

Yeah, if they were refusing to service to them.

Wilson:

They'd never say that, that they were refusing service but they still didn't want our patients. Even today they don't want our patients. I have a couple stories on that but I'm not on the Board anymore. But the uh, so it was the social well-being, the physical needs by the community, the county's totally responsible for, and what has happened in the years is that the state, after Prop 13, we became the child of the state. And the state would give us a mandate to shove off, they didn't want the expense of it. So they'd give us the mandate but not give us the money to fulfill the mandate. So we were always scrounging

for money, we were always having to go and lobby the legislature to get them to fund us money. Everybody tried to drain the county because after the property taxes, and I always said that Prop 13 did one good thing: it kept people in their homes. You could no longer afford to buy ____ (??) property taxes. In many other states, presently right now, my son and his daughter had bought a home in San Antonio and the property taxes are rising. It's doubled since they bought their home. So they are going to move out of that area because they can't afford the taxes anymore. They had moved from Houston to get rid of the high taxes, and now it's happening in expanding San Antonio because they want to build roads and they want to expand the city, they just create more property taxes.

Moon:

So did you vote for Proposition 13 when it was on the ballot?

Wilson:

No, I did not.

Moon:

Yeah, I don't know anybody who voted for it but apparently it got through.

Wilson:

Oh yeah.

Moon:

I guess I don't know the right people.

Wilson:

No, you don't know the right Republicans.

Moon:

Yeah. Now looking at, um, the work load for the county, how was it, were how these projects distributed? Was it a sort of situation where, uh, you know, your representing one district and so you would like focus on a particular aspect or you had a, or how did you, like for example, how did you become acquainted to the chair of the auditing committee? Was it something that you approached?

Wilson:

Well, each year that I chaired, it's changed, and each year, you had your assignments of the board. And usually, the new chair goes and talks with you about what were you interested in, what would you like to do? And our committees were county-wide, although you had a district. So some areas were there before I was there and like, Rod Diridon, who was a, loved trains, he had been a train guy.

Moon:

He was the transportation guy.

Wilson:

So that he focused on transportation from the start. So he did go. So he wanted to crowd(?) everything that was transportation. We had to fight to get on some of the transportation _____ (?). For the Gilroy train that went down, when it went down to Gilroy, I fought to be the chair of that committee against him and got to be the vice-chair, which he didn't like but he accepted that that _____ (?) successfully in Gilroy because that was part of my district, he could give up a little bit but he, uh, hung on to those very tight and some things he was not the least bit interested in. So people had their interests, and so they would bargain with the chair of the Board to be appointed to that committee. I had been on the audit committee with the city of San Jose, and worked very closely with the auditor, who was a person who was appointed by the city counsel. So the auditor reported to the city counsel, and I was interested in finances. I had an F minor [Finance minor] in, ran the budget in this household, and so that the auditing the committee really was one that the auditor was dreaded in the city because he came through and told the county, the department, the _____ (?), how they could run their shop more efficiently and save money. And he was not liked. Jerry Silva (?) is now the auditor of San Jose city, and he's not well-liked by the other departments. So when I got to the county, no one was particularly interested in the audit committee, and I was. So I saw if I could be in the audit committee and I got to be the chair of it, very, you know, usually if you asked for something like that you got to be the chair, and then another member would serve with you. And the auditor at the county was appointed, was selected by the county executive, so that there was difference because county supervisors didn't know as much about the inner-workings because they didn't have an officer reporting to them. So we really could never find out what was happening inside the departments that could be improved because they reported to the county execs. So we couldn't really question all of that at budget times easily. We'd have to ask a lot of questions at budget time, we found out where something could be changed because there was, the departments were quite content to continue on like they are moving along, they're not willing to change much unless you get an exceptional new leader. So it was my idea to make the auditor responsible to the Board of Supervisors. In fact, I remember going and speaking to the Association of Auditors in the county and they just thought I was great. They loved the idea, _____ (?) having the Board responsible for it, you could really dig in and find out what's happening. But we couldn't get that through. The county exec opposed it completely and _____ (?) the charter changed to get it done. So what we did, we decided that we would hire an outside auditor to audit different departments at different times. When we found like that we felt like this audit, this department, like the Sheriff's department, was over-spending, we'd have the outside auditor, Harvey Rose from San Francisco, go and audit that department. Usually Harvey Rose always had more things that could be done that we knew they were not going to do. There was, uh, so they'd go in and make a lot of recommendations and make a good good newspaper discourse. Usually, there were some we were never going to change because yeah, you could save a few bucks, and it would come out big numbers, but there was also some very interesting things that we could get done at budget time that would make the department more accountable for while they were doing something. So that was a kind of a fun kind of a responsibility that uh, I was in charge of the project that _____ (?) Harvey Rose, but we'd vote at the Board which departments we felt needed auditing so if maybe Rod wanted certain function of the transportation department audited so that he could get

something that he felt would be more efficient, you know he might put in his request for transportation. So we would, we would probably only do three departments a year, but we would have to vote on which departments we did, and we'd have to come to agreement on it. So we just couldn't —

Moon:

Just audit somebody?

Wilson:

No, couldn't audit somebody. It had to be public, it had to be in a report, it went to the county exec. Sally did not like the outside auditors because that felt, that infringed on her leadership and that's what she should be doing as the County Exec. She should be making these departments do what's right. But we did it. And so Harvey Rose was not well-liked and the administration doesn't usually like what he does. He's still around, still doing that, today. So because once you put something in place, which is one result in politics, once you put something in place, it's hard to get rid of it. And that's why I wanted to put things, systems in place that would achieve some of the goals I felt was important for San Jose and the county, the world. Make the system more open for all kind of people, not just white males. It worked and once you get that system in place, it's changed.

Moon:

So would you describe that as one of the most important legacies you left in your work with the Board of Supervisors?

Wilson:

Always with the city and with the Board, yes. I'm proud of the way the system has changed and there's a lot of systems in the United States that have not changed. But this is a unique county and they were ready to accept the change. We had a County Executive who was as, uh, like Sally Reed who really promoted women. We'd say we want more minorities, she would, she was good in that she would promote minorities up to executive positions. If that didn't work, she'd find a way for them to go to another job, some place else in the county, not consider them a failure but that they were not a fit. And so that she was always considerate of the individuals that she tried to promote up, to help them rise up. So she hired minorities, she hired women, and for the first time because this was a male-dominated male county government. There were no women in any place in the hierarchy. I think maybe the librarian got to be a woman, Barbara Campbell (??). I don't think that there was a man before Barbara. I am not sure. She's, of course, retired now. But it was a—every executive was white male.

Moon:

Worse than the city experience?

Wilson:

No, they, the city was a white male dominated hierarchy also.

Moon:

Until the, Janet Gray and the rest of the people, the women that came in.

Wilson:

The issues were brought to Janet Gray, and she voted for them, that was not her priority, particularly.

Moon:

Right, she wasn't necessarily what you would describe as a feminist, even though she kind of coined the phrase, "the feminist capital." That's my impression, anyway.

Wilson:

I think that's true. But that's okay because even coining the expression was good for the city.

Moon:

Yeah, and it was good for the women involved in politics, so however you slice it, you know, it was very positive thing for women in the area, I think. And also for the people who, you know.

Wilson:

She was much more really an environmentalist than a feminist.

Moon:

It is interesting that there is such the personalities that are so divergent, you know, even in just talking to the women that I have, you know talked to for this project. I'm going to be actually interviewing Blanca Alvarado in a couple of weeks, and so I was wondering what interactions you had with her in any of her political squabbles.

Wilson:

Well, Blanca was with the city and I've always supported Blanca whenever she ran. I think she would say that there were times that I can remember when she was on the city counsel that she had a problem and we sat in the car at lunchtime, made sandwiches and she discussed some of the problems she was facing as a Latina on the city counsel but she was a strong woman who really through the force of her personality and through push got a lot accomplished for the East Side that she did by the dent(??) of either shaming or coercing or getting the votes to get some things done. The last few years at the Board of Supervisors, and I don't know that she agreed to this or not, but she'd get ill, she had diabetes, she sloped too much, and so she had not been in good health. So I think that she is in better health now than she was, but I do know that she has been a very popular first Latina, and to really be there, and to be there for the East Side. Whether it was prudent or not, she got the job done for what she, the goal that she set out.

Moon:

Okay, well, that will be interesting to see what she has to say when I talk to her.

Wilson:

Susan Hammer was close to her, and she should credit Susan Hammer a lot with helping with her goals for the East Side accomplished.

Moon:

After you finished your work, your tenure with the Board of Supervisors, you decided not to go to other levels of politics, and so maybe just remind me why you made that decision, and then what sorts of other, you know, interests did you put, you know, your work into?

Wilson:

Particularly, the last four years of my last term, there were opportunities, there were openings, there were openings in the State Senate, they even had an opening in Congress that people wanted me to run for, and I even had the Attorney General call, and I guess he was the majority leader. _____ (??) called me and asking me to run for the Senate position.

Moon:

Could you just say that again in the, closer to the speaker because I don't think it will pick that up.

Wilson:

I'm sorry. Yes, Bill Walkier (??), who was the majority leader after the legislature time (??) called me one time in my office at Ford(??), asking me to run for State Senate position. I said, "No, thank you." [laughter] I said, "No, thank you," to the, an Assembly job that was open that uh, and I said, "No, thank you," to a Congressional race that was coming up. That was Norm was leading (??) and Jim, uh, Mike Honda ran for that. But, I think that's the one, but I was never interested in going because I knew that I couldn't always vote the party line. And when you grow up in state politics, I'd seen what had happened to Bacon(??) Morgan, when she was pro-choice and she was in an anti-choice government with Dick Machon(??), it was Wilson, and she was shut out of leadership positions she should have held because she was so much better than so many other people there, and she finally got discouraged and quit. And I didn't want, I did not want to be ruled by the party, I just was too independent. If there was something that, a core value that I had that I was going to have to swallow and vote with them, I wouldn't have done it. I don't think I would have done it, so I was willing to say, "No," to a higher office because I wasn't going to have that tested because I felt like it wasn't worth it to fight for something and then be discouraged.

Moon:

Was it difficult to make that transition?

Wilson:

No, no, it didn't bother me. I always loved local. I loved being close to people, and I also saw that, and of course, I always said I was never going grow old on an airplane, I didn't want to go to Washington. [laughter] Out here on the West Coast—

Moon:

I know, it's a long ways to Washington.

Wilson:

It's a long ways to Washington, year in, year out. Norman Mineta did it. They all do it, Zoe Lofgren. And Zoe, though you see, is a yellow dog democrat. She loves just the whole essence of competitive partisan politics, and good for her. That's why I supported her when she ran. I knew she would be good because she loves the law, just loves it, eats it up. That's where the big laws are made. So I knew that she would be good there. And some of us are content to be close to the people, and after I got out of office, I continued doing the same things that I had done my whole life is work with people. Work with the YW, and the challenges there, and work with the Girl Scouts, and work with the Boys and Girls Club and Boy Scouts, and that was natural with my three boys as Eagle Scouts. Just do what I'd always done as well as just be a consultant, keep my finger in, and stay involved in politics.

Moon:

So your consulting company, how, what exactly do you do there to enable younger politicians that are coming to you or other government people that are coming to you for advice?

Wilson:

Well, I don't, my consulting job was a way to make money so that I could have an office and stay busy but that was different from political.

Moon:

Okay.

Wilson:

My consulting was for clients who don't understand how to get through government.

Moon:

Okay.

Wilson:

It could be land use, it could be a contract, it could be some simple thing, and very often even, even last, uh three weeks ago, I met with some people and told them how to handle— they were some environmentalists, and there was a logging problem in my old district one. And I sat down with them and laid out a scheme of how to get what they wanted, which was to get that stopped. So I spent— because one of my friends who was a friend of theirs said, “Go talk, sit down and talk to Susie.” Because I love strategy and I understand strategy and governmental strategy and what they have to do. I have a physical therapist friend who when I was going to him, he lives in the mountains, uh Santa Cruz mountains, and he was having trouble with them. I didn't take him on as a client, I just told him, “you need to go sit down with Don Gage and sit down with Rachel, who was chief of staff for land use, and explain what they are doing because that's wrong

and you shouldn't have to do that, that planning department and county is wrong." And I've—about every three or four years, he'll call me and he'd gotten into some fight with the county and I'd say, "Yeah, you're right, just keep on it, but go see Don." You know, I did a lot of that, like um, uh, so that it was never to make money. It was the joy of creating once more the change that was needed to make people—

Moon:

Successful?

Wilson:

— be able to, both sides, the county to get what they needed, and the client to get what he needed because I could understand why the county was telling somebody no. The client wasn't hearing it right. They don't hear what they should be hearing to hear what they want to hear.

Moon:

Well, that's always true, isn't it?

Wilson:

That's always true. So I, that's the part I enjoyed, you know, for clients when they uh, when I did work for them. But there were a lot of people that I talked to on the phone and I would just tell them how to do something. A friend of Bob's at the senior center said that she had this problem, she had this land up in Chico. She needed to _____(??), she thought it would just be a slam dunk but she found there was opposition toward she and her brother's to sell this land and be able to develop the land. So I, she wondered if I could help. I called her and I said, "You don't need me but what you want to do is you want to," because she had somebody there, I said, helping them with _____(??) process, "you need to ask him to go and ask some of the well-situated with the planning department, find out which attorney is very good with the Board of Supervisors up there in that county. You go and hire him to represent you as your land person, and he'll be able to handle the angry neighbors, and he'll be able to have a meeting, and he'll be able to solve it for you." But that's a strategy, I didn't need to go up there and do that. I just needed to tell them the right person because I'd be no good up there. But you get that right person, who has been going to the Board for years and they trust him, he'll get it done for you. And he did. [laughter] It was just as much fun as if it gave me a thousand dollars. So, um, that's what I still do but then the political part of it is has always been, even today. This morning I met with a young woman who wants to get involved in politics. And the word of mouth is if you are gonna run for office, whether it is in Mountain View or Los Gatos, _____(??), you go and talk to Susie. What do you do?

Moon:

Yep.

Wilson:

Then I'll give them an hour or two hours, and I'll have them call me back anytime because that is part of my, to me, it is such a joy to be able to work with people who are

interested in government, especially women who want to run. Occasionally, a man would come and talk to me, but women would always come and talk to me. It's, you never know when something's going to influence. I was the chair of the gay and lesbian task force by the—for the United Way. This was representatives of the different companies, sent representatives, she was from Hewlett-Packard I think. I didn't know that she lived up the peninsula in San Mateo county, and there was a city up there that she lived in, and three years later, she called me and said, you know, "I did it." And I said, "What did you do?" And she said, "I ran for city council because of you! And I won." And that made me feel good. My leadership on that committee and her working with me, and seeing the possibility, she said that she could do that in her little small city in San Mateo county.

Moon:

Do you still give pop lectures over at San Jose State?

Wilson:

I haven't done that in, uh, since I did that leadership over in residence. No, I think that that is of the young ones who are in office at that time I think is gone in terms of that but I'm still involved in the political science alumni group and the Edwards leadership forum and all of that. So, yes, I keep my finger in over there and work with, in fact we just had a meeting. This morning I had an appointment with a young woman who is an attorney, a law student at Boston University that had worked for Marilyn Judge, Marilyn Morgan this summer. She is very interested in politics and she's very interested in what's happening to women, and she, Marilyn told her to come and talk to me. So I spent an hour with her over at Stacks, the restaurant across from my office. And she's twenty-four and she found out when she worked over at the court, Marilyn is a federal bankruptcy judge over in the state building or the federal building, one of the two, but she's, and so she was an intern for her. And she found out that at her, where she is now, the ceiling is right there, that glass ceiling. She is—was amazed. She said, "it's just astonishing the difference between the men and the women." And how she is treated and how they're treated. You know, she talks to somebody about getting involved in politics, she says, "I'm twenty-four. A guy whose graduate at law school at twenty and he says I want to run for congress, they'll say, 'That's great, you'd be marvelous.' And they look at me and say, 'You're too naïve, you're petite, and you're this or that.'" Already she's faced that discrimination. I said, "I'm so glad that you recognized it because too many young women today are too complacent and they don't know it's out there. You've seen it clearly because you very bright." And, uh, so I gave her a lot of clues on the way she can handle some of those men. [laughter]

Moon:

Yes, I think so. You've certainly been good at handling that.

Wilson:

She's going back to uh, she's a second year law student.

Moon:

Well, I hope she goes into politics.

Wilson:

She wants to and uh, so I said, "You know, when you get ready to talk again, you know." But I, and I, she, I said, "When you finish," I said, "One way to get involved and understand why you do politics is get involved in a campaign." She could do that back in Boston and find out how it works which is really good. I didn't do that but I had people around me who'd done that.

Moon:

That's probably a good way to get immersed into the culture of it before she can really understand it.

Wilson:

Yeah, yeah. And that what's Cindy Chavez, she was thoroughly based, she knows how to run a campaign. She's completely organized. She's done that in the labor movement and she's organized campaigns.

Moon:

She's a go-getter.

Wilson:

She's a go-getter.

Moon:

I sure like her a lot. I like the enthusiasm that she has and that she also has committed to important social issues.

Wilson:

Yes, she is.

Moon:

Susie, do you think that women are more committed to social issues than men are in a politic framework?

Wilson:

Um, let me say this: What I have found that since women are involved in politics, you'd be surprised at the men that leap on to be the one who establishes a rape prevention law and the one who establishes the laws against the deviants, and Megan's law, and all they're ready after, you know, Jackie Spears and a few of them take the lead. They leaped on it. They did the same thing in this county. The ___(??) crisis, you had ___(??), you had leaping onto being the leader in this. So what we did is we helped socialize the men. [laughter] By discovering, they discovered there wasn't, they thought women would only be concerned ought to be concerned about women's issues. And they help up ___(??). So they have changed politically. If you'd look back probably thirty years ago in the state legislature when there were no women there, they were not the concern about the issues. But now they, their feet have been held to the fire. [laughter]

Moon:

Yeah, and there's no turning back, really.

Wilson:

And there's no turning back. You know when you have a Dick Cheney, whose daughter is a lesbian, although it came out in a way that probably was not popular. You have a feeling that he understands more and he's never taken issue against gays. But you'd think a Dick Cheney would, and you got a president who has. But, we always say is, you know, the first time that some of these men, and they some of the things happen to their children—

Moon:

Then they have a different perspective or wake up call or something.

Wilson:

They have a wake up call. One thing that, when breast cancer in this county, this young woman came to me and she had had breast cancer. She's from Saratoga, and she was trying to create this interest in changing legislation at the national level. She was just beginning, she came to me at the board of supervisors, where I gave this resolution. I said, "Yeah, but ____ (??) I want you to have this room packed. I want you to have your symbol, whatever your symbol is. I want you have placards outside, to get publicity of you want more money spent at the national level. Breast cancer. And that started that whole movement.

Moon:

Really!

Wilson:

Yes. She followed my advise and she really, she was a go-getter. She got the, go to your legislators, your congressmen/women. But you got to start here and start with a big rally. At the county Board of Supervisors. You know, she had the guts to do, but she didn't know what to do. I told her—

Moon:

She needed a little direction.

Wilson:

—She needed direction so she could do the system, and she did it. I could take no credit except of being a teacher.

Moon:

Well you're a good teacher I think.

Wilson:

I hope so.

Moon:

In looking through all these, the scrapbooks that I've looked at through so far, I need to actually sift through these a little more carefully and I'm sure there are some questions or themes we could pick up on for a later interview. But I came across this one in the 1987 scrapbook, where you were doing the laps for SJS, and that was the Spartan women —

Wilson:

Walk for Woman's ____ (??)

Moon:

Uh huh. I didn't know anything about that before, so I'm trying to get one of my students to work on documenting that event because according to '87 it was the fifth annual year of that. This is a great photograph of you in running. I thought that was terrific.

Wilson:

I helped create it.

Moon:

You did?

Wilson:

Yes.

Moon:

Oh, okay.

Wilson:

Do you want the story now?

Moon:

Yeah, you can give me the story.

Wilson:

I was city council, and Joyce Malone came to me and asked me if I would— and I've been raising money by this time for probably I was raising money for my ____ (??) I helped raise money before for other things. She came to me to see if I'd fire the gun for the athletic women's athletics run for nationals. What they were doing is they were getting pledge on the campus all of the women athletes, so that they could go to the national competition. So I went there to fire the gun, ____ (??) had their pledges and all of this. They were such neat young women. After it was all over, I was appalled at the small amount of money that they had raised. They were trying their best to get to nationals and I don't know whether they could get there. Raise their own. So I didn't think ____ (??) they didn't have very much. Pat Hand (??) is the person to talk to though, she's always a part of that. They ran sixteen laps. So, the next year Joyce called me and asked me if I would fire the gun again and at that point I was over at the Board of Supervisors. I said, "Yes, I could. I just think you need to raise more money. So I'm going to challenge the

president Gail Fullerton(?), that I can run more laps than she can and I can raise more money for the women. More than she can.” And she accepted the challenge. So that was going to be—so it was 1980 and in August of 1980—the run was going to be in the fall—August 1980 I ended up with my back and leg paralyzed, my back had gone out on me, and I was in the hospital. So, I realized my running days were over because I have a disc problem. So from the hospital I wrote Gail a letter. I said, “Dear Gail, I cant run, I’ll challenge you that I can walk more laps than you can and raise more money.” She accepted of course. Indeed that was the first really big money. Pat Hand and Joyce (??) raised some money. I did raise money, beat her in that first time in the money. We both the same amount of laps of course. I did an extra lap just to prove that I walked more than she did. [laughter] She was (??) than I was. So, after that I, then Joyce Malone (??) she had really gotten my interest. She fought (??) so she met Gail and she got a meeting with Gail and myself and talked about “could we do this and (??) get more women involved in it.” So we created the Walk for Women Sparta. (??) We made a list of prominent women who were SJSU people, the wives of, is what they really were. The wives of the athletic ones who men gave always. The women had never been involved. Some from the outside that I could think of, and we got a list of about seventy-five women. Then I trained them to go out and teach them about how to raise money and we had the Walk for Women Sparta. That first year was 1981. I have all the pictures, I have a lot of the programs, I have all that stuff.

Moon:

You do?

Wilson:

Oh yeah. In my San Jose State folders back there in the back room. We raised a good million dollars in ten years. The last year we gave the money to an endowment for Mary Zimmerman who had become the women’s athletic associate director. So she has a scholarship named for the Walk of the Women of Sparta. We built that from that first piddling amount.

Moon:

How much did you raise the first time?

Wilson:

I’d have look that, but was less than \$15,000. It was small. Some people would find different ways—and we did fun things. We would have (??) some (??) we would wear crazy one time. We all had a good time. The men serviced our breakfast. The men (??). I would go to a company and tell them that for \$500 I’ll wear their company t-shirt for one round. I got to where I couldn’t put them all on. I’d put off that one and have one underneath it. So I stripped as I went along. [laughter] I have more than fifteen t-shirts. I was gonna pop. Some people did that same thing but a lesser amount. They’d wear a t-shirt for \$50 and that was big time for them. What I did that first year, of course I won the prize. I realized I would always be the one who raised the most money, because these were just beginning women who were trying to raise money. So I (??) “You can only win the big prize one time.” Then we had a rookie of the year and we had this and we had that

so everyone got prizes. To win the top prize—I knew that if I always won, it would be long time before somebody else would beat me. Diane Renburg (??) finally got involved and she did a (??) raised more money one time than I did that year. It would kill it, because (??) wouldn't even aspire to be it because they would think it was impossible. So I eliminated myself as a contestant. So they created a special thing called the Super Woman who raised more than a certain amount of dollars each time. They'd give you a special thing for each time that you raised. That's all in their someplace. They had used that as—Pat Hand probably has everything all documented. We raised over a million dollars in ten years. The men were raising money for athletics, really believed that we were—they were having less money, because we were taking their guys. We were taking money from them. So what they found out when (??) stopped, when women were tired of it. Mary was gone. They were ready to quit. The new athletic director really didn't understand what it meant to us women. So we quit. That was when the boys found out that extra one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand dollars was money that they lost.

Moon:

It went to the whole athletic (??)

Wilson:

It went to the program but it made less money. They had to raise—we raise for women athletics. That was for the first time they saw the value of women raising different money for different folks. ____ (??) I got on the board of the Spartan foundation in the '80s. I was the second woman to be on that board. That's why I knew how they felt about us taking their money. They discovered we didn't take their money, we generated our own money. ____ (??) it stopped and we lost it. Two hundred thousand dollars.

Moon:

Well I think that's really, that's a great story. It's a great story about women as fundraisers and all of that, but when we get ready to do an exhibit in January through the—you know for the 150th, I'd like to do an exhibit on that, a small exhibit on that piece. If I can borrow some of the material you have. You said that Pat's the one who might have some—

Wilson:

I think what I don't have she has.

Moon:

Is she still with San Jose State?

Wilson:

Oh yeah. She's still very active. She just had her 80th birthday. She and her husband were teachers. She's a remarkable person. She and her husband were school teachers. They had no children, and they were interested in all of the athletes. All the sports, they went to everything. He died, but she's still there. They were the counselors for the student athletes to get there grades, to get their grades. Academics were important to her. She

really, you know, person ____ (??) sometimes you interview for, cause she's a special woman, she's been given honors for the athletic department.

Moon:

So she would be a good person for our second phase of our university/oral history project.

Wilson:

Yes, she would. She and her husband and Dave, they've endowed the university, they've endowed scholarships, other money to help. ____ (??) is going to go to the university. ____ (??)

Moon:

Definitely that would be a good person to contact.

Wilson:

She lives in villages.

Moon:

Oh she does? Okay. A number of ____ (??)

Wilson:

You can get of course ____ (??) over at the athletic department has ____ (??) I have her number too, she is easy to get a hold of.

Moon:

Okay, great. One other thing I wanted to ask you before I turn off this thing was, on this opening page to your comments on who you are, you have this thing where you are talking about the district, then you say "I'm a long time member of the Kitchen Cabinet of Mayor Ron Gonzalez," so I wanted you to explain the Kitchen Cabinet.

Wilson:

I was on the Kitchen Cabinet of several politicians. Mike Honda when he ran for the assembly the first time, Susan Hammer. The Kitchen Cabinet in politics are the advisors that you pull together to strategize on how you can get where you want to go. They are a mixture of people—the person who is creating the Kitchen Cabinet wants a person who is ____ (??) the people who make, who are vote makers. Other people follow their opinion, they raise money, they're helping prominent people that are rich, or they give sound political advise. When Ron first started, I can start with him, because I've been on Susan's Kitchen Cabinet. ____ (??) pull together this committee, start strategizing about how to win the race, and to take advise on what do I need to do to improve. I'll say this about Ron. There are times when I'd be critical of him. I'd say, "Ron, you can't be so withdrawn. You got to get out and show more of who you are inside, because you're a good person inside. It doesn't show through you, you keep a wall there. You gotta break down that wall." He'd listen to me and never once be defensive. ____ (??) a group of people. Twelve people there. The next month he'd have a list of things he'd worked on that people would say, "Work on these things." He'd named out two things he'd done

was more of a populist kind of thing. He'd turn, he'd say, "Susie I'm trying." He was a good person to work with on the Kitchen Cabinet. I did support him for mayor. It's sad what's happening. There comes a point—that first election to Kitchen Cabinet is very important. They keep their ear to the ground about what's happening that the candidate is not going to feel. You have to be very cautious in life because when you're a candidate everybody tells you what your doing wrong. If you followed every piece of advise you'd be split in ten different directions. You can't have that, you got to have people who understand, you got to filter criticism, and how do you can say something that can be positive, instead of negative. Those are the kind of things that a Kitchen Cabinet person does. The second time the cabinet stays through till the second race. At that point the kitchen cabinet disappears. They are so confident, they know what they want to do and they've become unnecessary.

Moon:

How did it become called Kitchen Cabinet?

Wilson:

That's just always what its been called. So you would have to go back into politics to find out.

Moon:

So that's a standard term that's used?

Wilson:

It might be because you sit around the kitchen table and strategize. You net(??), so that's its intimate.

Moon:

Alright, well that's good kind of short term sort of. It will help me to think about that whole idea of the kitchen cabinet. A female sort of terminology to talk about political strategy. That's very interesting.