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# Transcript for Episode 35: Comeback Kid: Against Re-election Odds Tom Judge Wins Record Plurality Victory

Bruce Nelson

Kent Kleinkopf

Evan Barrett

*Executive Producer*, ebarrett@mtech.edu

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**[Begin Comeback Kid-Against the Odds-Judge Sets Record 1976 Plurality Record]**

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**[Music]**

00:00:03

**Narrator:** From the beginning of Montana's distinctive yet troubled history, the Treasure State was dominated both economically and politically by powerful outside interests who shipped in capital and bought control of the State.

00:00:14

Historians tell us that as the Anaconda Company and its friends ran Montana, economic and political power flowed out into the hands of distant capitalists and corporations.

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Policy was determined in far off New York City and control of the press was rigid. Anaconda's corporate dominance in Montana's political affairs was unique in American history. For its first 75 years, Montana was a one-company State. But then big winds of change roared across the Treasure State; between 1965 and 1980 Montanans ripped off their copper collar, transforming Montana from a corporate colony into a free modern State.

00:00:55

The people finally controlled their own destiny. The pitched battle between the people and the established power structure was not easily won but fired In a Crucible of Change a new Montana was born. Join Evan Barrett and real history makers of the time as they shine the light on this remarkable era.

00:01:19

**Evan Barrett:** Welcome back to *In the Crucible of Change*. Today we're going to continue to tell the story of one of the key players of the period and that's Governor Tom Judge. You know in earlier segments we've--we've talked about his early years, his formative years and--and then we had a--a segment, an episode about the 1972 campaign and the first Administration of the Governor.

00:01:49

We're going to follow with a segment on his second Administration because he had eight years as Governor, right in the heart of the period of *In the Crucible of Change*. Today however we're going to focus on politics and challenges. We call this *Comeback Kid* because we're going to talk about Tom Judge in the latter stages of his first Administration and some of the challenges politically that were brought forth and made it even look a little bit dicey about whether or not he would get a second term. And then we'll work our way through the election itself which resulted in a--essentially a record win at that time.

00:02:36

So it's a terrific story of comeback and we're lucky to have a couple special guests who participated actively in--in both the ending of the first Administration and in the campaign of 1976. First is Kent Kleinkopf; Kent has joined us again and we've introduced him before to you but Kent has got his degree, his Bachelor's from University of Idaho, his Master's in Economics from the University of Utah, went to work for Ted Schwinden when he was the Land Commissioner but quickly slid over and went to work for Tom Judge in his first campaign. You were probably his first full-time staffer in that campaign, unpaid, however. And--and you became part of his first Administration where you were the first Citizen Advocate of the State of Montana.

00:03:33

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Correct.

00:03:33

**Evan Barrett:** A position that still helps citizens deal with government. You stayed in the Judge Administration through the 1972 campaign, the Citizen Advocate years, the '76 campaign. You were then named the Director of what was then called Business--

00:03:51

**Kent Kleinkopf:** The Department of Business Regulation.

00:03:53

**Evan Barrett:** --Business Regulation. Now it's the Department of Commerce, but you were Director of that Department. And at--after--after doing that for a few years you went into the private sector where for the last 28 years you've been in the vocational rehabilitation/consultation field, although I understand you retired recently.

00:04:10

**Kent Kleinkopf:** We have. We're in the process of finally closing down our office.

00:04:16

**Evan Barrett:** Well congratulations on that. You've got time to hang a few signs.

00:04:20

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Kathy, my wife and I are pretty happy to be where we are right now.

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**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; in Missoula now for many, many years.

00:04:27

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Right.

00:04:28

**Evan Barrett:** Right; joined by Bruce Nelson. Bruce is a Fort Benton native, went to the University of Montana, and although he lives in Bozeman here quite a bit in recent years he remains a big Grizzly fan.

00:04:45

**Bruce Nelson:** That's right.

00:04:46

**Evan Barrett:** And Bruce was a student lobbyist for the students at the University of Montana when--doing that and some work in and around the McGovern campaign when we first were acquainted. And when Bruce first came into government and politics at a higher level it was to come into the Administration of Governor Tom Judge to work with me in full disclosure, and part of our role was to try to help the Governor establish his--a strong position with the people of Montana, which--and as you often say good government is good politics, so--.

00:05:27

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; yeah.

00:05:28

**Evan Barrett:** We were trying to get good government to work and be seen by the people of Montana. So you were in the Governor's Office with me but left to--in 1976 when we had our first Presidential Primary in a lot of years, you managed the Frank Church for President Campaign in Montana, which was a big successful campaign, a real hallmark. It was a wonderful campaign you ran. And then you went back into help with the campaign and into the Governor's Office. And you stayed there for several years when you left to help with the Pat Williams campaign. Again, we worked together on the Pat Williams campaign and when Pat was elected to Congress you went back to Washington, DC and you were his Chief of Staff for a number of years, but couldn't resist coming back to Montana, right.

00:06:18

**Bruce Nelson:** That's right.

00:06:18

**Evan Barrett:** The farm was calling and--and the Fort Benton was--you were missing Fort Benton, but after you had been on the farm for a little while you became and were elected State Democratic Party Chairman at which time you served almost eight years as that--weren't you?

00:06:34

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; yeah '83 through almost the end of '91.

00:06:39

**Evan Barrett:** And it was during that period that you and I were worked together again because I was elected National Committee Man of the Party so we continued this ongoing relationship for some period of time. But when Bill Clinton was elected you were selected by the President to be the head of the Farm Service Agency in Montana and did that for the full eight years essentially of the--of the Clinton Administration.

00:07:03

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; that's right.

00:07:03

**Evan Barrett:** You left that into the private sector again but worked with Brian Schweitzer and after his election in 19--or in 2004 you went into the Governor's Office where again you were Chief of Staff and I was lucky enough to be able to work with you in--in that for--. I was there for the full eight years but after about five years you were asked by President Obama, once he was elected to become head of Farm Service Agency again; is that right?

00:07:31

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah.

00:07:32

**Evan Barrett:** So you've been doing that for his Administration including the year of service in DC?

00:07:37

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; well I got recycled into the State Executive Director position in 2009 and then was asked to go back to Washington, DC to head up the Farm Service Agency for 14 months at which time I promoted myself back into the State Executive Director position in Montana and was very happy to come home from Washington, DC for the second time.

00:08:02

**Evan Barrett:** So you could get back to Montana.

00:08:04

**Bruce Nelson:** That's right.

00:08:06

**Evan Barrett:** That's always the case. I notice you're wearing an interesting lanyard there and that's I think a leftover of the Schweitzer years isn't it?

00:08:13

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; this was something that those of us who worked in Indian Affairs in the Schweitzer Administration were presented with at the end of the first Administration by Anna Whiting [Sorrel] and Jennifer [Perez-Cole] and Rhonda Whiting for our service working on Indian issues in the first term.

00:08:37

**Evan Barrett:** That was one of the hallmarks of that Administration was--was opening the doors of--

00:08:41

**Bruce Nelson:** So this is pretty special. Now--now it holds my Federal identification card and--. [Laughs]

00:08:47

**Evan Barrett:** Well welcome to both of you because you both played significant roles over an extended period of time in both the public Administration of Governor Judge and with his campaigns. And again saying that there was an integration of politics and policy is something we all need to recognize is again like you say good, good policy, good government is good politics. And so you all both contributed to that.

00:09:15

Now the race we're talking about which was a--the 1976 race, you may recall that we talked about how in previous segments about how Tom had a pretty massive win over Big Ed Smith in 1972. In 1976 he ended up running against Bob Woodahl. Bob Woodahl had been more than just a State Senator; he had been Attorney General for eight years and as Attorney General he had his eye on the Governorship for a significant period of time.

00:09:46

I like to refer to him as kind of the accidental Attorney General in a way because he was a relative unknown County Attorney out of Teton County, Choteau, and he was running in the Primary--in the General Election in 1968 against Gene Daly who was the County Attorney of Cascade County, one of the biggest cities and counties in the State, who was looked like he was going to win far and away--was going to win big-time but it's worth repeating the story about things happen in politics sometimes because a *Great Falls Tribune* reporter, John [Kooglan] had written a series of articles about prostitution and bribery and lots of things that were going on, nefarious things that were going on in Butte Silver Bow.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Gambling.

00:10:36

**Evan Barrett:** Gambling yeah that were going on in Butte Silver Bow. And the Lee Newspapers according to Chuck Johnson said that--decided since there was a story written about Butte and nobody had written the story about Great Falls, they sent a couple reporters, a couple writers and researchers up to Great Falls, Sam Reynolds and Jerry Madden who then did a big expose in the Lee Papers about prostitution and gambling and kind of nefarious deeds that were going on in--in Great Falls. And low and behold that ran two weeks before the election in 1970--or '68 and it was enough of a problem there, enough of an appearance of difficulty that Bob Woodahl suddenly won by only 9,000 votes over Daly and then he was Attorney General.

00:11:30

And again he immediately had his eyes on the Governorship but he was called Bingo Bob. Does anybody-- you want to talk a little bit about what that was about?



00:11:44

**Kent Kleinkopf:** *[Laughs]* Well as I remember, Mr. Woodahl had been around the State shutting down little old ladies' bingo parlors.

00:12:00

**Evan Barrett:** He really hated gambling.

00:12:02

**Kent Kleinkopf:** He hated gambling and he thought bingo was--the way it was being conducted was illegal. So he would shut these games down. Needless to say that didn't endear himself to many, many people around the State at that time.

00:12:19

**Evan Barrett:** Well you know the--that was the nickname was Bingo Bob Woodahl and it stuck with him. But that being said, when you're an incumbent State officeholder, when you're elected at the State level and you're holding office and you have responsibilities and he--as the head of the--ultimately as the head of the--the law enforcement, the Highway Patrol and everything, that incumbency is worth something. So in 1972 he ran against Sheehy?

00:12:48

**Bruce Nelson:** Skaf Sheehy yeah.

00:12:51

**Evan Barrett:** Skaf was a State Senator from Billings and well-known but--

00:12:54

**Bruce Nelson:** Big family, well-known, a lot of friends around the State but you know in spite of what was a pretty good year for Democrats and Tom Judge being elected Governor, succeeding Forrest Anderson and keeping the

Governorship in the hands of the Democratic Party, Bob Woodahl won by a big margin against Skaf and pretty much set himself up for a potential race in four years.

00:13:23

**Evan Barrett:** And it does go to show you that the value of having been on the ballot and being a statewide officer as opposed to being a Legislator who sits over here elected out of either just one county at that time and now it's just out of one district, so a lot of times Legislators are--when they get in the legislative process think boy this is the most important thing in the world that everybody in the world and everybody in Montana knows me.

00:13:48

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Everybody knows me. *[Laughs]*

00:13:50

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; yeah.

00:13:50

**Evan Barrett:** But the truth is it doesn't hold a candle.

00:13:53

**Kent Kleinkopf:** No; it doesn't.

00:13:54

**Bruce Nelson:** And then the first time when they get on the campaign trail that they go over to the neighboring community and find out nobody knows who they are--it's kind of a surprise to them.

00:14:02

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Yeah.

00:14:03

**Evan Barrett:** So that even happened to Skaf who was a wonderful gentleman and later a--

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Still is.

00:14:08

**Evan Barrett:** --rather significant--

00:14:08

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Still is.

00:14:09

**Evan Barrett:** --and he still is; he's still around. And--and he was a rather significant member of the Montana Supreme Court for many years. So a State House Member, State Senator, Supreme Court, but Woodahl defeated him. In fact I think the race against Skaf it was about a 9-percentage point win which is a fairly good win. I mean it was about a 30,000-vote win. It wasn't huge but it was--you know it was a Democratic year and yet Woodahl won. So all the sudden he's still there and he's kind of pecking away at wanting--and he wants to be Governor. There's no question about that. So that sets the kind of political context as--of why Woodahl was there.

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Now he by the way was opposed in the Republican Primary in 1976. Jack McDonald wanted to be Governor, too. Jack was an interesting story; it's worth us reflecting on. He was a former Democratic State Senator?

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**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; he was a Democratic State Senator from Belt, very highly thought of rancher from community out there, and had in fact been the Majority Whip in the State Senate in the 197--

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**Evan Barrett:** One of the great proponents of the New Constitution--

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**Bruce Nelson:** --3 Session.

00:15:30

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; he was one of the big proponents of the Constitutional Convention and he was a leader--in the leadership of the Democrats.

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**Bruce Nelson:** Switched Parties.

00:15:38

**Evan Barrett:** He switched Parties. He kind of got a little conservative as he got older I think or something.

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**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah. [*Laughs*] That hasn't happened to any of us I can--.

00:15:48

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; well you know Robert Frost one time said that I was afraid to be liberal when young for fear of becoming conservative when old. [*Laughs*] I find myself getting more liberal; I don't know.

00:16:00

But--but in any case we had a situation here where McDonald ran against Woodahl in the Primary but before that Primary a lot of stuff happened late in the last half of the first Administration of Governor Judge. I think we all discussed in early segments about the great policy things that were being done on education funding and the institution; give us a one-minute on the significant accomplishments that were going on with that Administration, Con-Con, the Economic Development, Executive Reorganization, and so on.

00:16:42

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well going back to the '72 campaign Evan, I campaigned with Tom Judge virtually daily. I drove the car, made arrangements for meetings, that sort of thing--advance work. We campaigned very hard for the Constitution at that time.

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Every place we went that was one of the primary things that we talked about. So--

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**Evan Barrett:** And you got to help implement it.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** And then we got to help implement it--the best part. The--the things that we were looking forward to however were environmental protection, adequate educational funding, doing something about the horrible situation in our State's institutions at the time--

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**Evan Barrett:** Executive Reorganization being implemented.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** And--and beginning the implementation of Executive Reorganization. So those were some pretty monumental achievements.

00:18:00

**Evan Barrett:** Well in fact, I think when the--when you look at the--the history book of Tom Judge, the accomplishments are phenomenal, you know. Partially a product of the time, partially--there they were but he was for the right stuff and got it done, pretty significant record of accomplishment.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Which you might add has pretty systematically been unraveled.

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**Evan Barrett:** Well every--at least--

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Ever since then.

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**Evan Barrett:** --at least there have been attempts and some have been successful and some have not.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Uh-hm.

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**Evan Barrett:** But yeah; there's--that's part of the challenge. That's why we're in this period of progressive change we're talking about. Tom Judge was such an important figure. Now as we approach the second half of the Administration it's--it kind of started in the first half that his election had happened but the--the context that was going on then was the Watergate context nationally.

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There was this exposure of this nefarious stuff that went on with Richard Nixon in Watergate and everyone was looking at campaign laws and where the money flowed and this and that and we had a campaign finance law that was adopted in 1912 by initiative called the Corrupt Practices Act. It was a good law for 1912, but it wasn't very thorough. So the 1972 Judge campaign had been conducted under a 1912 law but was being looked at in a post-1972 perspective and was found like any campaign to be pretty inadequate in terms of these--the level of reporting and how accurate it was because there were no--there weren't even any forms to report on. That led to a lot of suspicion and--

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** It wasn't--it wasn't even clear who you were to report to.

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**Evan Barrett:** Yeah. *[Laughs]*

00:19:51

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Sloppy bookkeeping is the term that's most often used in that regard.

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**Evan Barrett:** But out of that came a--two things kind of converged which was kind of a--I don't want to use the word revelation but it became clear that almost \$100,000--I think the term was \$94,000 had not been accurately reported, although it had been mostly spent in the campaign, a little bit was left over and it hadn't been accurately reported. And that became a cause celeb because we were looking at it through post-Watergate eyeglasses.

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**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah and you know that together with the issues out of investigation by Attorney General Woodahl of the Workers Comp Division that--

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**Evan Barrett:** And there was--yeah there--

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**Bruce Nelson:** --set the stage in a pretty difficult political environment for a second run for Governor for Governor Judge.

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**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; it was pretty tough and what happened was that there was enough actually I think in fairness I think it's worth saying that--that for some reason Tom had not engendered a great deal of loyalty personally from Legislators because he was very aggressive about getting stuff done. And so within the Legislature and within some of the Party apparatus, Democratic Party apparatus there were people out there that were stirring it up and saying we should be--because of this reporting discrepancy which by the way never turned out to be anything illegal, but it was--

00:21:35

**Kent Kleinkopf:** No.

00:21:36

**Evan Barrett:** --politically awkward. There were discussions of censoring the Governor and asking the Governor to resign, impeaching the Governor, these were all words that were floating around and it made it a very difficult political environment.

00:21:52

**Bruce Nelson:** Well and when you know when you--when you look back at it especially after the 1972 and '74 elections there were very strong majorities of Democrats in the State Legislature. And there was a feeling in the Legislature at that time because I was an intern in the Legislature in 1973 and student lobbyist in '75 so I was kind of watching it from a little bit of an independent perspective--that the Judge Administration could have been and should have been more in the forefront of things like the enactment of the Major Facilities Siting Act and the Coal Severance Tax. And when in fact the--the Administration, Governor Judge were not only supportive of it but a lot of that legislation including you know more than adequate funding of the School Foundation Program because I think they had the biggest increase in the School Foundation Schedules, those Sessions since 1948 when the Foundation Program was established, the Governor wasn't given credit for not only having supported that and signed the legislation but a lot of it came out of his Administration.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** But proposed it; actually proposed a lot of these--

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**Bruce Nelson:** So if you were honest about it a lot of that actually came out of Tom Judge and his Administration.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Right; right.

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**Evan Barrett:** That being said, you know being judged by a post-Watergate values when you were pre-Watergate with the problems we understood inside the Governor's Office, when I left the Party and went into the Governor's Office in 1974, back into the Governor's Office in '74, Governor Judge said let's fix this campaign mess-up and we proposed a law and had a big Committee work on it for an extended period of time, proposed a Campaign Finance Law which still is the law today, and which has the strongest campaign enforcement mechanisms of any State Administration of campaigns in the United States and it still does.

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And if anybody likes the enforcement, the tough enforcement that's being done right now by the Commissioner today for example, they can thank Tom Judge because he pushed the legislation, got it through the Legislature and signed it. You and I were there for the signing.

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**Bruce Nelson:** And I--

00:24:25

**Evan Barrett:** You were--

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**Bruce Nelson:** --I had the honor and privilege to be there when the Governor signed it and having supported it on behalf of the Montana Student Lobby because the students of the University System understood the importance of a strong Campaign Finance law in Montana so that the State that they would be a part of when we all got out of college was one that we could be proud of and know that the politics were above board.

00:24:55

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; now that was done in the '75 Session, an extremely difficult time because 1974 got really rugged for Governor Judge. And it got very rugged because of a thing known as the Workers Compensation Scandal. And we don't want to spend a huge amount of time on this thing but briefly there were some evidence that some of the money that was flowing inside into the campaign in 1972 came from attorneys and was related to Workers Compensation and there was a question of quid pro quo on that. And of course the--the Attorney General jumped all over that; that was an opportunity--. He deeply believed in conspiracy. He deeply hated gambling. He was a purist. He really believed there was a conspiracy around every corner. And so consequently he jumped all over this thing and pushed on it really hard. And in the '74 Session he got the Legislature even though it was Democratic to appropriate \$980,000 to him to do an investigation of it. That's almost \$1,000,000.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** In 1974.

00:26:07

**Evan Barrett:** In '74.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** A lot of money.

00:26:09

**Bruce Nelson:** A lot of money.

00:26:09

**Evan Barrett:** A lot of money to start poking around in everything and he did--even got it through the Supreme Court ruling and a Grand Jury empaneled and all kinds of people were called in and there was all--. In fact there was a lot of contextual things where the kinds of things that were going on in Montana with investigation and with wire-tapping and with pursuing legal action against people and questioning them and bringing them in was very similar to some of the secretive stuff that was going on with Nixon--

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Right.

00:26:44

**Evan Barrett:** --and his enemies list.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Correct.

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**Evan Barrett:** In fact, Tom Judge was audited three or four consecutive years in terms of the IRS which audited 18 Democratic Governors and no Republicans.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** At the same time.

00:26:54

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah.

00:26:55

**Evan Barrett:** So there was kind of stuff going on but Woodahl had a million bucks.

00:26:58

**Kent Kleinkopf:** There was a climate of absolute fear in the--in a lot of areas in the nation and including in Montana.

00:27:07

**Evan Barrett:** And one thing that did happen was there was a person that was found guilty. And which was Jim Carden was found guilty of some violations and he was the head of the Workers Comp Division and he did a--a huge, humongous deposition which was very revealing and looked really bad even though there were--there were no illegalities on the part of the Governor, but he was kind of drug into it and suddenly that affidavit was published in every daily paper in the State of Montana in December of '74. And so at that time I think it would be fair to say that people looked at Tom Judge and said this is a guy who can't win. I mean it--is that how you guys saw it?

00:27:51

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well--

00:27:53

**Evan Barrett:** Or that--you never say die but--

00:27:59

**Kent Kleinkopf:** --there was a great deal of concern, absolutely.

00:28:02

**Bruce Nelson:** Well when I--when I came to work up in the Governor's Office in the fall of 1975 I--I think you know the handicappers, the political handicappers in the State would have maybe at best given the Governor even odds of--of reelection the following year. But you know and I think at that point there--there was--it was kind of a crossroads for the Governor and his Administration and those of us who were a part of it and I think part of it was that he had to decide at that point whether he was going to continue to kind of be a captive of Helena and this kind

of bad political environment that had been created here by the Workers Comp issues, by the campaign finance issues, or he--if he was going to break free of that and breaking free involved going out and being Governor of the rest of the State because every Governor is faced with that. There's people in Helena that think that the Governor is a Helena person and ought to just govern Helena.

00:29:18

Well good Governors that do it right know they need to be Governor of the whole State. And so I remember you telling me that Evan when I first came to work, and so we spent a lot of time--Kent you were involved with that--getting the Governor out of Helena, back out on the road, not only talking about what he had actually done and his part in it--

00:29:44

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Or not done.

00:29:45

**Bruce Nelson:** --or not done--or not done, but listening to what was on the minds of people out there and not just here in Helena.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well Evan we--we all knew of course inside the Administration that we hadn't done anything wrong. So we--we had a--a strong feeling that we--we were--we were being maligned. The--the climate of fear had gripped a lot of people and including the media and so there--there were some very dark days at that time that we had to work out of.

00:30:30

**Evan Barrett:** But it was a lot darker in Helena than it was if you were in Shelby or if you were in Sidney because out there although they were getting a whiff of it you know the--the way it is in a capital city whether it be Washington, DC or Helena, Montana, is all that stuff becomes pervasive.

00:30:47

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Yeah.

00:30:48

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; because out there the kids in the public schools were getting a better education because of the funding that the Judge Administration and the Democratic Legislators and responsible Republicans had been--had done in those Legislative Sessions.

00:31:05

**Evan Barrett:** And if they--if they had someone in an institution from that community they were--

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**Bruce Nelson:** They were getting better care.

00:31:09

**Evan Barrett:** getting treated better.

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**Bruce Nelson:** The folks down in the coal development area could now count on Coal Severance Tax and a strong Reclamation Law and a Major Facilities Siting Act, so it was a matter of again, the Governor getting out of Helena, of being Governor of the rest of the State, of letting them know what he had done in addition to what he hadn't done, together with the Legislators, the Democrats and Republicans alike.

00:31:38

**Kent Kleinkopf:** And that was effective.

00:31:40

**Evan Barrett:** Uh-hm; now part of--and so in the Governor's Office one of the things that--one of the primary things we were doing while you were--when you came onboard and you were immensely valuable in getting that done was to get him scheduled around the State and get him out there. Make sure he had the opportunity to do governmental relations work with his own constituents and what they cared about. Now eventually citizens forums went to all 56 counties before he was done, right.

00:32:11

**Bruce Nelson:** Went to all 56 counties; Kent you were with him on most of those--most of those.

00:32:17

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Yeah.

00:32:18

**Bruce Nelson:** All seven Reservations, not just once but several times and for the first time as near as we could tell for any Governor to all of the universities.

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** University campuses.

00:32:28

**Bruce Nelson:** Campuses with an open mic and you know that's a--that's a risky thing to do on a university campus to just open up the mic, but Tom Judge went out and was willing to do that and did it.

00:32:40

**Evan Barrett:** And he--he had a really good sense of what people wanted. Of course it didn't hurt that the economy was strong. And while he was doing this visitation around he came up with the idea of the Homestead Tax Relief, which became not a--wasn't passed by the Legislature. Governor--Governor Judge proposed it and his

minions if you will, people like us worked with the folks out there in the State and helped get the signatures to put it on the ballot--

00:33:19

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Put it on the ballot.

00:33:19

**Evan Barrett:** --which overwhelmingly gave a check back to people who--on their property taxes because we were in good shape financially as a State.

00:33:28

**Bruce Nelson:** And it gave the same amount to the retired you know homeowner in Great Falls whose home might be worth \$10,000 or \$12,000 as it did to the very well-to-do person in the Billings suburb whose home at that time may have been worth \$100,000. So it was fair to everybody.

00:33:49

**Evan Barrett:** So out of all this thing he started to--the part of the *Comeback Kid* story was letting him be out there and be himself with his constituents. Now he was--because he was so aggressive about it he was unopposed in the Primary and but let's--let me have you guys share for a minute with me your sense of him as a campaigner because we've heard Ted Schwinden talk about how--how unbelievably strong he was as a campaigner and energetic.

00:34:22

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well I can personally attest to that [*Laughs*] having traveled with him on a daily basis for nine months in the '72 campaign. Sixteen hour days, plant gates at 5 o'clock in the morning every morning until midnight often with supporters finally after having campaigned, bowling alleys, supermarkets, street corners; he was tireless. He probably was I would--I would say the most effective campaigner that the State has--has seen. He certainly was the most energetic.



00:35:09

**Bruce Nelson:** And to follow-on that, when he would go into a restaurant for example he would not only greet all the customers, he would make sure that he met all the waiters and waitresses and then he would go back in the kitchen and shake hands with the cooks and with the folks washing dishes. And I was you know almost 20 years younger than Tom and in my 20s at the time and at the end of the day when we'd you know leave that last plant shift and you know this story--you know all this more than I did because as much as I traveled with him you traveled with him 10 times more, but at the end of the day I was pooped. I was ready to go to bed. And Tom was upset because there weren't any more hands to shake.

00:35:57

**Kent Kleinkopf:** *[Laughs]*

00:35:59

**Bruce Nelson:** Or babies to kiss.

00:36:01

**Evan Barrett:** Well you know Ted Schwinden who was running for--that was the first cycle in which the Lieutenant Governor and the Governor under the New Constitution--

00:36:08

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Ran together.

00:36:09

**Evan Barrett:** --ran together. Prior to that they had ran separately and sometimes with some interesting results of different Parties and so on. But Ted Schwinden was then running with Governor Judge and he related to how they were finishing up in Great Falls and the election was pretty much over and said we were so tired we just wanted to get in the car and go back to Helena and get in our bed and go to sleep and Tom said, well I'm going back down to the bowling alley. It was the night before the election, so that kind of energy--and nobody really could retail as good

as Tom Judge. You know I mean he was pretty amazing at it. He loved people and it did make--it did make a difference.

00:36:50

Let's talk a little bit about the Judge/Schwinden thing because the Lieutenant Governor for the first cycle was Bill Christiansen and Bill was a former Legislator out of Harden, former Legislative Leader of the Democrats, well-respected guy, was thinking about the possibility of running for election although there were some people who were trying to romance him into running for Governor. But--

00:37:16

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Successful businessperson.

00:37:18

**Evan Barrett:** Very successful, automobile dealer; he was a business Democrat.

00:37:23

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Very well-respected.

00:37:24

**Evan Barrett:** Very well-respected, and ultimately he decided not to--to run. And I think to Tom that was a big disappointment because of the respect he had for Bill. And he had to find someone to run for--for Governor. And I think he relates in his--for Lieutenant Governor with him.

00:37:44

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Lieutenant Governor.

00:37:45

**Evan Barrett:** And--and he relates in his book that he said--his draft book, he never got it published before he passed, that he thought of Ted Schwinden as someone withstanding and he also thought of Ron Richards who had

been a subject of one of our programs inside the Administration as having the kind of standing to be Lieutenant Governor. And that they had all jointly met together and decided that Ted ought to be running with it. And Ted was a heck of a good campaigner and he provided some real balance didn't he?

00:38:15

**Bruce Nelson:** Well if--if you think about it a minute you've got the Irish Catholic candidate from Western Montana, Tom Judge for Governor, and you know the--the son of homesteaders from Tule Creek, Montana out by Wolf Creek with an agriculture--

00:38:35

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Wolf Point, Bruce.

00:38:37

**Bruce Nelson:** Wolf Point. And that--you know that's a great balance, Tom with his background in journalism and public relations and Ted off the farm with--with the government experience that he got not only in the Legislature but as State Lands Commissioner that when Governor Anderson had him come down to Helena to be part of his Administration.

00:39:05

**Evan Barrett:** Uh-hm.

00:39:05

**Bruce Nelson:** So for you know for--for Montana you couldn't ask for a more balanced--balanced ticket.

00:39:15

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Very strong ticket; very strong.

00:39:17

**Evan Barrett:** So here you had all the sudden Tom Judge running with Ted Schwinden on a ticket, the Judge/Schwinden ticket. They--Woodahl was wanting to run and was ready to run though he had apparently spent \$1,000,000 and had very little to show for it, a couple convictions but a big Grand Jury with not much coming out of it. That isn't to say there weren't some problems there and there were some--some people that--that pled guilty and there was at least one or two actual trials, but it wasn't the big explosive thing that it seemed to have been.

00:39:58

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well one of the things that hurt Woodahl's chances a lot were the--well a couple of things; his Chief Prosecutor in the Work Comp Scandal found himself on--himself on the wrong end of the law when he attempted to have a keno caller allow him to play--

00:40:27

**Evan Barrett:** For higher stakes than the law.

00:40:28

**Kent Kleinkopf:** --excessive number of tickets which was illegal.

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**Evan Barrett:** That became public.

00:40:33

**Kent Kleinkopf:** That became public and of course he had to be prosecuted by the County Attorney who happened to be a Democrat, Tom Dowling at the time. So that pretty well sunk any chance Mr. Dezebie ever had to gain higher office. It didn't help Mr. Woodahl either.

00:41:00

**Evan Barrett:** And Woodahl picked Tony Roselle, a respected--

00:41:05

**Bruce Nelson:** Very, very highly thought of Republican State Senator from Billings.

00:41:08

**Evan Barrett:** State Senator from Billings.

00:41:10

**Kent Kleinkopf:** From Billings.

00:41:10

**Evan Barrett:** With the Billings connection.

00:41:11

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Right.

00:41:11

**Evan Barrett:** To be his running mate. And that was not--that was a pretty darned good ticket but Jack McDonald ran against him by the way with a fellow named Doug Kelly and--and I think actually Woodahl got 58-percent of the vote in that Primary. So that's a pretty substantial win but if you're the elected official and you've already been Attorney General twice, 58-percent was not an overwhelming shake.

00:41:38

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Not overwhelming.

00:41:39

**Bruce Nelson:** Well you would--looking at political campaigns and the handicappers they would think that he needed to at least get 60-percent to have the kind of victory that--that a long-time incumbent should have had in statewide office.

00:41:56

**Evan Barrett:** Uh-hm.

00:41:56

**Bruce Nelson:** That--that--that could have been a sign there of some weakness.

00:42:00

**Evan Barrett:** So we had a campaign engaged and it got really serious after the--after the June Primary. The Workers Comp stuff had gone behind it and Woodahl was campaigning actively, Tony Roselle was campaigning actively, Judge and Schwinden were out there campaigning actively. You had the--the battle for the Homestead Tax Relief going on at the same time. There was a lot of stuff happening at that time, but it was a fairly interesting race in a number of ways.

00:42:36

And--and I guess I'm going to take a second and kind of relate what--if you're looking at Tom's not quite finished book he talked a bit about--about the garbage bags and--and that was a bit of an extended story but--but it turned out that--that Bingo Bob as they called him, people were a little suspect already, turned out his medical records ended up in the hands of a reporter for the *Great Falls Tribune*. And those medical records showed that he was repeatedly going into the hospital and being taken in by ambulance over and over and over again and so the reporter asked him well what was that about? And he told the reporter, well I get these terrible migraine headaches and when I go in there they give me the shots of this stuff called Demerol. And it fixes the headache. And then he volunteered--and by the way now they gave me pills. And if I--if I feel a headache coming on, I take those pills. Well Demerol is a highly addictive drug and it's a very, very suspect drug and very effective as a painkiller but--but saying you've got a whole bunch of Demerol pills that you can pop any time was not a good thing to do. And it was--revealed--it started to really hurt him politically but there was a--kind of an accident that happened as a result of that story. General Womack who was a very funny guy, he was the Adjutant General and he was a very funny guy. He decided--he called me up; I had become Deputy Campaign Manager of the Judge/Schwinden Campaign at that time and he called me up and he said Barrett, you got to get a letter to the editor that--that condemns the press for

revealing that Woodahl has all these drugs in his medicine cabinet because every junky in the State is going to want to break into his house. And it was really kind of funny.

00:44:38

And so I wrote a note down that said junky letter and I wrote Demerol down and I misspelled it and I set the note aside. And nobody ever did anything. I didn't do anything with it. And about--

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**Bruce Nelson:** Well because the story was already out there from the Attorney General Woodahl himself.

00:44:54

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; he said it. You know and so I just set the note aside. But eventually several months later I cleaned my desk off and I had months of stuff and I put it in a bag and emptied it out and put it outside and we were about a block and a half from the Woodahl Headquarters and Last Chance Gulch. And that night a couple of Woodahl staffers who had left Bert & Ernie's came headed down the street and they probably had--had more drinks than they should have and they looked down there and they saw this garbage bag in front of our Headquarters and they went over and they took it. And they took it over to their Headquarters and the next day they opened it up and they went through it. And they found this note that said Demerol junky letter. And Woodahl went crazy. He thought this really proves that Tom Judge stole my medical records.

00:45:38

And but there were also letters in there that were four or five months back because I was just cleaning my desk off after a long period of time. And so he calls a press conference and announces that Tom Judge has stolen his medical records and he was just--his eyes were all buggy and he was just excited as could be at the smoking pistol that showed that Tom Judge had done this because of this note that said junky letter Demerol. And--and he held a big press conference and it became a big thing and we had to deal with it in the campaign. And--and it was an interesting story that I remember Ron Richards who was Campaign Manager and myself going to meet with Ted Schwinden and say well--well how do we respond to this? And long story being short Ted said--Ted said I think people relate more to their garbage being stolen than they do their medical records because we weren't in the HIPAA age back then. Nobody really knew what medical records were.

00:46:41

And the--no privacy laws on them, so--so we called a press conference and Ron held the press conference. And we had prepared two big bags of garbage with Judge Schwinden bumper stickers on them and Ron sat there and he--he announced that--he announced that it was dangerous for Woodahl's campaign staffers to come skulking across Last Chance Gulch in the dark at night. They could get hit with cars and stuff; that in order to preserve their safety we were going to deliver our garbage to Woodahl for the rest of the campaign. And of course the press just ate that up. They ate it up and of course it did look like they'd--in fact he--Ron said, look at--there; there's letters in there that are four months old and three months old and two months old and these guys have been systematically pilfering the garbage.

00:47:36

And so the fuss--suddenly it became a story of Woodahl has been stealing garbage which pretty much sank the campaign. I mean that was almost the end--

00:47:45

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Didn't help it.

00:47:45

**Bruce Nelson:** When--when Ron walked across the street and deposited the two bags of garbage on Woodahl's-- John Cavanaugh, his Campaign Manager's desk.

00:47:57

**Evan Barrett:** With cameras running.

00:47:57

**Bruce Nelson:** With the cameras from virtually every television station in Montana there.

00:48:04

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; so it's things like that--



00:48:05

**Kent Kleinkopf:** We're going to save you the trouble of having to collect our garbage. We're going to bring it to you.

00:48:09

**Bruce Nelson:** Here you go; we'll--we'll deliver it. We'll deliver.

00:48:12

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah and you know but ultimately those are kinds of campaign shenanigans, the kinds of things that attract the attention of the press, but the real campaign was about the hearts and minds of Montanans, was about accomplishment, was about tax breaks for homeowners, it was about good environment laws, good education funding, good policy and Tom Judge stood for all those things. And so it's easy to get involved in the anecdotes of campaigns and forget that the real substance people look at is how was the economy doing--that type of thing.

00:48:50

**Bruce Nelson:** They were pretty good times in Montana and they were made--

00:48:52

**Kent Kleinkopf:** They were.

00:48:52

**Bruce Nelson:** --better by Tom Judge, by Democrats and Republicans working together in the Legislature and passing the most progressive legislation, not only in Montana history but to this day some of the most progressive legislation of any State in America, because I've had the--the privilege of working for elected officials in the State since then including Governor Schweitzer and that foundation that was laid in that era was what we built upon in the Schweitzer Administration and what Governor Bullock continues to build on today.

00:49:34

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Good point.

00:49:36

**Evan Barrett:** Uh-hm.

00:49:37

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well you're fond of saying that good government makes good politics. What I am perhaps most proud of and--and feel privileged to have had the opportunity in the Administrations that I served in were the people. The people that we brought into government, that we promoted, that we enticed to work perhaps for less than they could have in the private sector were some of the best people that have ever served in State Government.

00:50:15

And Tom's book points that out rather clearly.

00:50:21

**Evan Barrett:** Repeatedly he talks about quality yeah.

00:50:23

**Kent Kleinkopf:** And repeatedly.

00:50:24

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; well it was sure an honor for me just having got out of the University of Montana to have been able to be a part of that and to work not only with you but for both of you in those days.

00:50:41

**Evan Barrett:** You think of any things in that campaign that stood out, the--that you might want to relate? We all know about the retail politics they're talking about--

00:50:57

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well I ran out of gas in the car twice. *[Laughs]* The first time I pulled off onto a frontage road and I had to jump the barbed wire across both lanes of the interstate, go knock on a door of a defunct logging operation. He got out of bed, cranked his old gas pump, and gave me a gallon of gas. And I threw \$5 at him and ran back across the freeway and put it in the car and we got to Missoula just a little bit late for the speech.

00:51:37

The second time when I ran out of gas it was very early in the morning. As luck would have it I pulled into the farmer's driveway, pulled right up to his gas pump, ran up, got him out of bed. He said sure; I'll give you some gas. So did the same thing then; threw \$5 at him and took off. And we made it to Kalispell on time.

00:52:03

**Evan Barrett:** You know it was an interesting operation running the--in the campaign management side. Ron Richards who clearly was a very serious player had been Party Executive for the Democratic Party, had been an intern with Senator Metcalf, became Chief of Staff under Forrest Anderson, stayed as Chief of Staff. They didn't call it--they called Executive Assistant I think.

00:52:32

**Bruce Nelson:** Executive Assistant.

00:52:33

**Evan Barrett:** Chief of Staff under--under Anderson and Chief of Staff under Judge, headed up the Highway Department later, had--had a very sterling record over many, many years and was highly respected. Tom got him to run the campaign. And I ended up being the Deputy and sitting right next to me was Ted Schwinden's son Mike and Mike was helping out with the campaign and that's about the heavy-duty structure with--it wasn't like campaigns are today. Most of the advertising was done by Bob Hinkle at Sage Advertising, Charlie--

00:53:09

**Bruce Nelson:** Lester.

00:53:10

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Lester.

00:53:11

**Evan Barrett:** --Charlie Lester, they were the two guys that were doing the creative side of the advertising. Tom was an advertising guy of his own so he had a good sense of that. So you had a core team that was pretty--pretty fun to work with. Most of it was out in the field; the secret of good campaigns are that they aren't in Helena. They're out there in the field where you got troops working and everything else.

00:53:35

I want to relate--I'll relate one quick anecdote; every candidate is susceptible to the ups and downs of campaigns. And Tom was no different. And the--he would go out and if he didn't see enough signs he would think god things are bad in this campaign. There aren't enough signs and I saw Woodahl signs, but I didn't see my own signs. So this got to be a bit of a--actually a bit of a problem and we had a fellow that kept saying what can I do to help the campaign? So we hired him and said here's where the Governor is going for the--and you stay--here's his schedule. And here's--you take a car and go out there and fill them up with these signs and you hang signs a day ahead of him.

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So everywhere the Governor went he saw signs of himself. And it did amazing things for the esprit de Corps of the campaign. He thought well this campaign is so good because there's--. Funny how--

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Signs everywhere.

00:54:29

**Evan Barrett:** --something like that makes a difference psychologically in a campaign. But again, the big thing was we had a strong economy that--dynamite economy at the time.

00:54:38

**Bruce Nelson:** Well and--and there was consistency between what was happening in the Governor's Office in governing and what was happening in the campaign. The messages were the same. People in the campaign like you and Ron had been part of the Administration and so it was a matter simply of the campaign getting the--the governing process out to people and the benefits of it.

00:55:09

**Evan Barrett:** Well in--in fact, it's sometimes commonplace for the campaign to be so separate from the Administration that they lose their synchronicity.

00:55:18

**Bruce Nelson:** Right.

00:55:18

**Evan Barrett:** You know we're getting close to the end.

00:55:21

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Once again Evan, great people.

00:55:23

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah; yeah.

00:55:24

**Kent Kleinkopf:** Can't say enough.

00:55:25

**Evan Barrett:** Well we're getting close to the end, not there yet, but I want to ask if you have a personal reflection on your activities that you might want to--what it meant to you to be part of both the campaign and the Administration?

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**Kent Kleinkopf:** Well I've already--I've already spoken to it. It's--it's the fact that I happened to be in a position traveling with the Governor as much as I did to have his ear a little bit and I was able to recommend on any number of really highly-qualified individuals for State positions, Boards, Commissions, the same, working in the background in that respect I guess is my proudest accomplishment.

00:56:15

**Evan Barrett:** Before I ask you for your assessment I want to--I don't want to miss--I need to report that as the election night held--was held, Tom Judge got 195,000 votes. He won by 80,000 votes over Bob Woodahl who had 115,000. It was a 61.7-percent plurality. It was the largest plurality in the history of Montana at that time. That's why we call this *Comeback Kid* because it went--he went from--

00:56:41

**Bruce Nelson:** A year earlier--

00:56:41

**Evan Barrett:** Yeah.

00:56:42

**Bruce Nelson:** It was doubtful when I came onboard and--.

00:56:48

**Evan Barrett:** Your reflections.

00:56:48

**Bruce Nelson:** Not that I had much to do with that but it--it was an honor to be a part of it.

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**Evan Barrett:** This was your first real serious thing--

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**Bruce Nelson:** Well I had--

00:57:00

**Evan Barrett:** --in politics.

00:57:00

**Bruce Nelson:** Yeah; I had been involved in the Presidential Campaign back in 1972 on behalf of George McGovern as a volunteer while a student at the University of Montana. And again in 1974 for Pat Williams when he first ran for Congress, but this has been you know the first time it had been something more than avocation. I was actually part of the Governor's--

00:57:28

**Evan Barrett:** This was--you walked in the door which you had been in for 40-some years so do you have any reflections--?

00:57:34

**Bruce Nelson:** Well I think like Kent, the people. I think the people mean more than anything, the friendships, the honor of being associated with you and Governor, Lieutenant Governor Schwinden who went on then in an interesting time to become Governor and the other thing though is that I really learned over the course of that time what--what I talked about at the beginning that good government is good politics, what the people are paying you to

do isn't anything magical. It's not secretive. It isn't behind the scenes or it--it's do a good job of governing. Do what they're paying you to do. Govern well, serve well, and when you do that you'll be rewarded at the polls.

00:58:29

**Evan Barrett:** Well this is a period of progressive change. All of us had a chance to play a role in it thanks to Tom Judge. That's part of his story. We'll come back in the next segment and talk about his second Administration and thank you for joining us *In the Crucible of Change*.

00:58:47

[*Music*]

00:59:46

[**End Comeback Kid-Against the Odds-Judge Sets Record 1976 Plurality Record**]