The John H. Glenn, Jr.
Oral History Project

Interview 7
(Listed Interview 23)

at the Ohio State University Archives,
The Ohio State University

June 19, 2009

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Interviewer

(Interview 7, Tape 1, Side A)

THOMAS: This is the seventh of a series of oral history interviews with Senator John Glenn. Today is June 19, 2009. This interview is taking place at The Ohio State University Archives. My name is Jeff Thomas.

Senator Glenn, today I would like to continue with our discussion about some of the significant events that took place during your first term in the U.S. Senate.

SEN. GLENN: Fine, good.

THOMAS: In the 1976 presidential election, you were on the short list of candidates to become the vice presidential running mate of Jimmy Carter. Carter ultimately picked Walter Mondale as his running mate. What were your experiences during the selection process?

SEN. GLENN: Well, I guess number one I was highly complimented that I was even considered. They wanted me to come down to Plains, Georgia for an interview and be there with the family for a while, which I did. We went

out on the peanut farm with President Carter and looked around and talked and we had a very good visit. He ultimately selected Mondale, of course, and exactly why, who ever knows. There was a better fit there I guess, and I was certainly not critiquing that at all. But I think there had been a couple of things. One, at the convention that year I had been selected to give one of the speeches at the convention. Of all things I followed Barbara Jordan, who was a woman, a big forceful speaker, a wonderful speaker. She could just move an audience, and she did, with amen lines all the way through. She just had it going like a revival meeting.

Then they quit and Bob Strauss, who was Chair of the convention that year, tried to get the crowd quiet for the next speaker, which happened to be me. Now following Barbara Jordan speaking was not something I had ever planned in my whole life. I can guarantee that. Because she was great, I liked her. Never did get the crowd quiet. I began my speech and Bob Strauss said, "Go ahead and start," and I did. My speech was not like hers at all. It was not a rousing speech. It was a speech more on the things where I felt the Democratic Party should go, which is what I had been asked to speak on. I don't know, out of that I think I certainly got, at least partially, a reputation for being less than a great speaker, and perhaps that was one of the factors. I don't know.

The rest of it—the only other thing that we ever heard and it was never repeated, was that Roslyn Carter, Mrs. Carter, thought that with Annie's speech problems, that that would not be too appropriate for a First

Lady. In fact, we asked—who was the Press Secretary, Carter's Press Secretary? Jody Powell. I asked Jody Powell directly if that was a factor, and he wouldn't answer me on that. I even wrote a note on it, and never got a reply back. So I don't know whether that was a factor, and I'm not making excuses at all. Carter made his decision.

Ed Muskie, who was a great Senator, was also one of those considered. Mondale was certainly a great Senator and he was the one who was picked, and that was fine. We just went back to being in the Senate, and that was it. But I was gratified to even be considered. It was an interesting trip down there and to be there in Plains, Georgia and see where he came from. It was sort of like a visit back to New Concord. New Concord was a small town, too.

So we did have some similarities there, coming from small towns and having a similar background in some of the science areas. Of course, he had been a graduate of the Naval Academy and was trained in nuclear subs. That was an area I was just getting into at that time in the Senate. Not subs but nuclear matters. So we talked about that some and about the need for research in the future, how we built this country and how we needed that. I remember some of those discussions. We had complete agreement in those areas. It was good to be considered anyway.

THOMAS: During Carter's administration, you did not always agree with him even though you were in the same political party. One of the disagreements

was over the question, B1 bombers versus the B2 bomber. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, I'd be glad too. I felt we needed a heavy bomber. Carter had marked the B1 to be phased out. The B2 had been very secretive, what we called a black program. I wasn't able to tell most of the people in the Senate or anybody else. It was really a top secret program, the whole B2 program, because it was going to be a stealth program, where the airplane, the big bomber, was going to be able to fly without being detected by radar. That was a great leap forward.

In order to do that it had some unique control characteristics or design that I thought were very questionable at the time. I had been a test pilot and knew a little bit about aerodynamics, although I didn't have my doctoral in aerodynamics or anything like that. But there was no rudder on that airplane. That meant if it goes into a turn—tries to turn the airplane without a rudder—how do you keep this thing from being like a Frisbee. In other words, your aileron will make enough drag on your upper wing in a turn, more drag than the lower aileron, and it would make it want to turn. That's what you corrected on a normal airplane with rudder pedals. How were they going to do that? Well, it was all theoretical that they could work this thing out, which they eventually did.

I also wanted to see the first radar tests. Some of the first tests had proven that it didn't look as good as the plan was for it. So what I wanted was to see the results. I believed we should have a heavy bomber and I

hoped the B2 would work, but I didn't want to throw something that was valuable like the B1 away in the hopes that the new B2 would work. We had something in hand that we knew was a good bomber. So while in the committee I was on I put a hold, or put a requirement for some progress reports, on the B2, as to how it was handling aerodynamically, and how the stealth characteristics were working out under actual tests once they got it flying.

So that was one of the areas that we disagreed on. It was just a matter of; did you trust the theory of a B2 against the known qualities that we had in hand flying on the B1? So that was the reason for it. The B1 was a good airplane and it was a good delivery airplane. But the B2 did come along and the hurdles that I had put on it in committee, as we called them, the hurdles on the aerodynamics and the hurdles on the stealth characteristics, those turned out to be okay eventually. And we still had the B1s until not long ago. I don't think there's any problem really with having two heavy bombers as far as that goes.

Anyway, that was one of our difficulties that I had with Carter. We had another one—a couple of other ones as a matter of fact. He and I disagreed on—he was proposing to draw down our troops in Korea farther than I thought they should be drawn down. Our troops out there had been a trip wire for a long time. I knew from visits out there that the alignment of the North Korean forces against the South was in the attack mode and had been for years. If our troops were not there as a trip wire, at that time

we had 40,000 some troops in the Kae Seong Valley out there leading down towards Seoul. And without those troops there I don't have any doubt to this day that the North Koreans would have tried to take over the South a long time ago by conventional means.

So I thought that we were really preventing war. If we took our troops out it would be an invitation to the North, what with all their crazy intentions that were there sometimes. Not only from Kim Jong-il, as we speak now, but his father (Kim Il-sung) before him, who was looked at as the father of the country. They had their artillery lined up forward. They had tunnels dug under the front. So in case we were attacked, they could send their troops through and come up behind our line. Fourteen tunnels, I think it was, were eventually found. They had huge numbers of people with military training, all lined up forward as you would be in an attack position. They had been that way for years. So I thought with the small, comparatively small, expense out there after all the sacrifice we had in the Korean war, I thought that was a good force to keep there, and so we disagreed on that.

THOMAS: What was President Carter's reasoning?

SEN. GLENN: He just wanted to draw our troops down overseas and thought we shouldn't keep our presence projected that far out. If our troops might be attacked, we'd have to come to their rescue out there obviously, and send more troops in. It was a forward position. It was in some danger. I

believed that that danger was worth it to keep the peace out in that area, which I thought our troops were doing.

I may have been affected to some extent by the fact that I had been out there and had been in the in the Korean War myself. We had lost over a period—the Korean War only lasted about three years, but we lost 37,500 people in the Korean War. Americans, not the others, but just the Americans, 37,500 I think it was. And that's within three years. In Vietnam later on, we lost 58,000 people, which is a bigger number, but it was spread out over ten years. So Korea was a vicious war. We came through that. We were guaranteeing the continued existence of South Korea, and with our commitment of troops there I thought it was worth it. So we just disagreed on that.

Another area that we disagreed on some was on SALT II, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

THOMAS: That was sort of your most public disagreement.

SEN. GLENN: That was. He made a thing out of that and I guess I did, too, to some extent. We had some conversations on that, which were not very pleasant. One in particular I remember very well. My problem with SALT II, once again, was based on verification. I think it is fine to limit things and to say we're going to reduce them way down to lower levels. That's fine with me. But at that time, we had no way of verifying what they were going to do, whether they were living up to this or not.

We had just—the Shah had just been overturned in Iran. Another secret thing at that time was that some of our best radar sites for monitoring what the Soviets were doing, our best radar sites were in northern Iran. We had lost use of those sites. So we couldn't verify it and there were all sorts of plans that people were coming up with. We were going to put something in Turkey and it was going to sense something going up and then we were going to do something else. And there were some of these plans that I thought were just not technically feasible. My view once again was, when we can verify then I'm going to be for this. If we have a means of verifying it, fine, because the objectives of SALT II were very good. I liked that. But I wanted to be able to know what they were doing. We did trust well. I just wanted to verify along with that trust. I didn't see anything wrong with that. So we had a real disagreement about that one.

THOMAS: The SALT II Treaty ultimately was never taken up by the Senate.

SEN. GLENN: Signed by, I think it was signed by (Leonid) Brezhnev and Carter and that was about 1979, I think. It was sent to the Senate for ratification and it was never passed. It was mainly on that area of verification. Later on, of course, we had gotten into things that sort of took its place with the non-proliferation treaty and the reduction of it. We'd set up for the targets for reduction between our nuclear weapons and the Soviets. That has worked well.

But my view was—were we going to, with all we knew about the background of the Soviet Union at that time, were we going to trust them or were we going to go without means of verifying that they were living up to what we had signed. That's all I wanted was to get it verified. I made it very plain at that time, the day we can verify is the day that I will get behind you and support this, because I think it's good.

THOMAS: About this time, November 1978, you had taken a trip to the Soviet Union. It was led by Abe Ribikoff. Was there anything about that trip that you noticed or saw or learned that made you want to verify and not trust so much?

SEN. GLENN: Oh, I don't think it was so much off that trip. That trip was one of the best trips we ever made in all the 24 years I was in the Senate. Abe Ribikoff had it all set up and had everyone set up for briefings in the Kremlin and other visits. I don't know if there was anything that happened on that trip. It was just at that time, we were right in the depths of the Cold War. We had just come out of the Cold War. We were just starting to come out of it a little bit. In the Senate I knew all the reports, all the intelligence reports of what estimates were, of what was going on at that time. I don't think there was anything specific on that particular trip. Being there with a Senate group like that, we did get a lot of attention in that we were given lots of briefings and discussions by some of the top officials. It was one of the first trips in which they opened up as much as they did. I think trips like that were very good in building confidence

back and forth and helping us relieve some of the difficulties of the Cold War.

THOMAS: Okay. Let's move on from President Carter and go on to your 1980 re-election campaign. It was your first re-election campaign and you ran against James Betts, who was a Republican from Cleveland. At the time, your margin of victory in that campaign was the largest ever recorded in Ohio. Were there any factors that contributed to why you won in such a landslide?

SEN. GLENN: I could say a lot of self-aggrandizing things but I won't. I had worked hard in that first term. I really had. I had gotten into some of the things I had promised I'd get into. That was the election, also, that [Ronald] Reagan was elected. We sort of ran against the tide that year in that. While he won big, I also won big in Ohio. I ran against his record. I felt there were too many people unemployed. We had about a million unemployed. He had made major cuts in research and education, which I thought was not right at all. We had a different view of government. His view was to shrink government, shrink, shrink, shrink, no matter what you had to do to do it, just about. He was a pleasant enough person to be around and came across—he had the ability, part of it was his actor training, but it was very good training on how to present yourself on TV and speak to the people. He was a real pro at that.

I just felt there were too many—also, at that time I had an increasing feeling that we were getting too much into fringe policy. There

were things, what I saw as sort of minor issues, that were being made into major issues in the campaign and I didn't like that. I thought there was too much emphasis—we were already beginning to split, which I guess we've seen more of in this day, doing this interview in 2009. A certain split exists still today. But I kept talking about that two-third or three-quarters of the people in the country who were not fringe, either right or left, in their views. What I talked about was—we need more emphasis on government programs that would help what I called the sensible two-third or three-quarters of the people that were out there in the middle in their political beliefs, who don't take fringe or extreme attitudes on things. That was what came up. That was much of what we talked about in that election. But I won that pretty handily.

THOMAS: As you said, you won a large majority as a Democrat in an election that really swung towards Republicans, putting Reagan in the White House. I think the GOP gained seats in the Senate that year, also. Did the result of your election influence you to run for President a few years later?

SEN. GLENN: I'm sure it was a factor in it. Anytime you have a big win like that. Let me say something about Ohio. I think Ohio is a little bit unique. It is unique. Ohio is like a microcosm of the whole country. We have every interest here that there is nationally. We have all the old smoke stack industries here that have had such a tough time during the last couple of decades, last two or three decades. We have all the new industries here.

Some have thrived, some not, but we have had representation at least of all the new industry.

We run from what used to be sort of hard rock hill country down in southeast Ohio, where I came from, where mining is the biggest industry, out to some of the very finest farmland in the whole world by measure of production per acreage.

Up in the northeast part of Ohio, in particular, we have every ethnic group I think that ever thought about coming to this country and have remain organized. Up there in the summer time you can go to some different festival every day up there if you want to, where they preserve some of their national traditions from their nations of origin up there.

Our economy is pretty well split between agriculture and industry. We run from some of the most conservative political thought to the most liberal across the state. So here we are, sort of the crossroads of the country. The license plates used to say "The Heart of It All." That was true. And it's true of the interests of the country, also.

So, the reason I was saying that, you asked did this affect my views towards running national. I expect it probably did, my campaign in Ohio being sort of a microcosm in the broad interests. People had mentioned before about the possibility of my running nationally. So that was something that had been brought up; it wasn't a brand new idea. But I'm sure that sort of pushed me along that direction.

THOMAS: You also came out of the 1980 election with substantial surplus in campaign funds, which you used to travel the country for a while.

SEN. GLENN: Well, we saw in the last part of that campaign—the question was—we thought that I was pretty well ahead. Everybody thought that. Even the Republicans thought that and I think even my opponent thought that for part of that time or some of it. So we didn't want to just waste money. So I don't know how much we had left over, maybe it was a hundred [thousand dollars]. I don't know what it was, I don't remember now. But there was a substantial sum of money left over. So we won big and that gave me enough money to do some travel and do a little bit of organizing. Sort of test the water a little bit as to whether I wanted to think about going bigger or not.

THOMAS: You touched a little earlier about your differing views with President Reagan. Was that a major factor in why you decided to run in 1984?

SEN. GLENN: Well, one thing I did not run for. I did not run for more personal attention. I can guarantee you that. I ran because I thought that if my ideas on where I thought the country should go were good enough to get me elected in Ohio, I felt that my views were where I'd like to see this country go. That was the driving force behind this. It was not just to run for the ego trip of running for the presidency. It was something where I felt if my views would benefit the country, and I really believed that, then I've got guts enough to run and try. And that was basically it.

I felt having been through a couple of elections then and having seen that Ohio's interests are normally the national interests, and polling in Ohio—let me back up for a minute. Ohio is used, even by industry, as a test marketing state, particularly central Ohio, in the area where we are sitting right now. It's used by the major corporations to come in and do test marketing, because for some reason or another in the national polls, Ohio is always within one percentage or a percentage and a half on national polls. So if my views here had prevailed well in Ohio, which they just had at that time, if I presented these views nationally would it be something that could benefit the whole country? That was my decision as to whether I really believed I could do that or not.

THOMAS: There was quite a substantial number of Democrats vying for the nomination during that time. How did you see yourself stacking up against your opponents? There was a whole slew of them.

SEN. GLENN: Well, there were. Any one of them you think about how you're going to fair off against them. In fact, the number that ran at that time—there were a lot of people upset about some of the things that Reagan was doing, people upset on the Democratic side. Teddy Kennedy was thinking about running. This was in the fall of 1982, and then Teddy decided not to run at the end of that year for personal reasons. Well, he would have been a very potent candidate. Now next to him, of course, was Mondale, and I was running. Then we had a real panoply of people here, if you want to use that term. We had Jerry Hart and we had Rubin Askew of Florida,

(Alan) Cranston, California senator, and Chris Hollings and George McGovern.

So we had about six or seven of us running, which made it somewhat difficult, because it was not the ideal situation to get your own views across. Everybody is invited to these all candidate nights and that's a big deal. Each state invites you to several things where it's an all candidates thing. Well, it was seven people who were there, whatever the total turns out to be, I think it was seven running. The time that you have at one of those things to get your points across, to really let people know in some detail what you really believe and are thinking about and want to do in certain areas, your time is extremely limited to put that across. I don't think any of us were successful really. I think everybody had that same complaint. So I'm not unusual in that area.

Mondale went out ahead, of course. He was the favorite. I was next to him in that. Then in some of the polling later on, after we had gotten going, when we did a match up person to person, as I recall there were some polls where I ran ahead of Fritz. Not just for the Democratic nomination, but when we polled one on one against Reagan, which would be the person we ran against later on. We did very well there.

We made a lot of mistakes in that campaign. They were fatal obviously. I'll never be sorry I ran because at least I had the—when I think about it myself sometimes, I think maybe it was Don Quixote, jousting against windmills or something. But it was not as far as I was

concerned. We put out a lot of views that I think still should prevail to this day.

Later on, Bill Clinton came along later and ran, to some extent, on sort of the same things, not all of them, but some of the same views that I had taken earlier on the fact that we needed to bring people together towards a sensible center. I thought when we started splitting off into these fringe elements that can hardly speak to each other; I thought that was a big mistake. So I think the ideas I was trying to get across at that time were good, and I did a poor job of putting them across. But I'll always be glad I tried.

THOMAS: You chose your hometown of New Concord to officially announce your candidacy in April of 1983. Was there a reason you chose New Concord, your own hometown? It was sort of away from the mainstream media.

SEN. GLENN: It was. In some ways I think what I thought at that time, and I'd probably do the same thing today if I were doing it over again, I wanted to come back to Ohio and do that. Ohio's where I grew up and Ohio was representative of the whole country. I thought about the things that we had talked about here and I thought everything is not based in the cities. I thought it was important that we included all of America and that people know that starting out. So that's the reason I came back here. I liked that, I still remember that day very well.

THOMAS: What stands out in your mind?

SEN. GLENN: The crowds, the excitement, the young people more than anything else. We did it at the school. The place was filled with young people as well as others. After the [space] flight back in '62, they had renamed the high school there after me. So I thought it was very appropriate to come back here and meet with the people who had thought that much of me from some of the previous things. I thought that might be a good place to start out there, with the bigger effort to the presidency. I remember more than anything else, I guess, just the crowds that day and the excitement of it. But I remember particularly all of the young people that were there. That was really important too.

THOMAS: And the media followed you?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, something like this, the media would come to where you are. It may have inconvenienced them a little bit but it that's too bad.

THOMAS: It still made the news that day.

SEN. GLENN: I think it made a lot of news that night. [Laughter]

THOMAS: You certainly had name recognition across the country. Did you see as you started traveling around the country, did that translate into political support in other states?

SEN. GLENN: No, when I look back on the national campaign, we made a lot of mistakes. We were not able to raise the amount of money that you needed for something like this. There were seven candidates, all split up, you can imagine the money was a real problem. I think some of the mistakes we made early on—I wanted to run this as a whole national campaign. I still

think to this day, that to let Iowa and New Hampshire almost dictate what happens in the campaign and be the big bellwether of everything that's going to happen all across this country, I think is not the way we should be doing this.

Now how you correct a primary campaign, I don't know how you change that around in peoples' minds so that the attention that is given in Iowa—of course Iowa has always won as the first state. They were the first and so the traditional way of doing things is that you go to Iowa and you go to everything. If someone in Iowa, and in New Hampshire the next week, had not met you two or three times personally, they think you're ignoring the state or something. I thought that was ridiculous then and I still do.

But we did not concentrate enough on Iowa and New Hampshire. Of course when I lost big in Iowa, then that almost was a preface for what was going to happen the next week in New Hampshire. We had taken a national view on this and maybe it was something that was a mistake at the time. I guess it was a mistake the way it worked out, because I was looking ahead and I thought you should be prepared right after the primary to really launch into a national campaign. That was going to be the secret of how we win. Looking back on it, you have to make the first traditional steps. I may not like the traditional steps of Iowa and New Hampshire, but that was it.

I think we already had state offices open in 40 some states at that time. Now you can say, well, was I cocky? Did I think I was automatically going to get the nomination? No, I certainly was not. But we just took a different way of doing this and thought that Iowa and New Hampshire, however we came out there—I don't think we figured that I would lose it as badly as I did. Then we formed other things and I was all set for Super Tuesday—Alabama, Georgia and Florida that was coming up. We did have a pretty good TV presence in Iowa. We spent quite a bit of money on TV. But compared to the time that other candidates spent there, I don't think I spent nearly the amount of time they did. That was a mistake and we just hadn't organized for this properly.

We knew some of these things were happening at the time. Every time I wanted to come off the road and said that I wanted to go back into Washington for a week and sit down and reorganize this whole thing, by then we had so many events planned. No, you can't cancel out on state chairman so and so who has been building up this big event for you. There was one event after another like that. And so I never did come off the road, really, and try and correct the set-up that we had. Looking back on it, I think that's what I should have done. This idea that one or two states—I guess what I thought, too, was, Ohio being the microcosm of the whole country more than any other state, certainly more than Iowa and New Hampshire, that that would come through in our campaign and appeal in those states as well. It just didn't work out that way.

So we just miss-guessed and concentrated on the wrong things, I think. If I were doing it again today, how would I do it? Well, I'd probably do it a lot differently today. But I still think this idea of Iowa and New Hampshire, in particular, having the early, having such a domination of the early attention of the media is wrong. Everything that happens, you are looked at as how you come out in Iowa and New Hampshire, and neither one are representative of the whole country. But if you come through there, boy, you're looked at as a frontrunner and away you go and all that. And that's just not the way it should be.

I'm not saying that Ohio should be the bellwether anymore than anybody else. But I think there should not be the kind of attention there is in those first couple of primary elections. That just determines the whole works. Plus, even the system used in Iowa, the caucus system, is flawed. You come in and people then divvy up and get in one corner and somebody referees and sort of counts who is there. No votes are actually cast. You go to the caucuses and count them up and then they send your total in. And you would say, "Well, no, I don't think there was that number at that caucus." Well, he had already made his report. There's no referendum on it at all, no verification for it, except you may have somebody under each candidate's representative there, who would probably count some of the same people, too. So you come out close to the same number. But I don't like the caucus system. I think you should cast a record vote. There should be a record of each person's vote.

THOMAS: You decided to continue on until Super Tuesday, which was a number of southern states, as you mentioned earlier. Did you do that because you felt given your positions on various issues, more voters in the south would be agreeing with what you were trying to say?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, to some extent. The reception I had gotten in Alabama, Georgia and Florida when I was there campaigning was excellent. The polling there had shown that I was running strong in those states. So I thought if I hung on there and really came through on Super Tuesday, that that would be good. That would sort of vindicate our whole approach and we would take off from there. So there was still hope and it wasn't just a futile hope. I had good support down in those states, but Iowa and New Hampshire had taken things in a direction and Super Tuesday turned out to be a disaster, also. Now I don't want to appear to be making excuses because other people had a different approach and it worked. I want to compliment them on what they did and say what I did was probably the wrong approach to it.

THOMAS: There are a couple minor things here during the campaign I wanted to cover. The movie "The Right Stuff" came out during this time. Did your campaign staff have a view that this was going to be a real boost or was it going to hurt you? Which way?

SEN. GLENN: I think most people at that time thought that it was going to help. I did not. I was in the minority at that time and I had not seen the movie. We had no connection with the movie whatsoever. A lot of people think that

we had some interest in it, the astronauts had some interest in that movie, and we didn't. I never have yet to meet the guy who played me in the movie to this day. But I think once it came out, that movie, if it had been a true documentary of the early space days, it might have helped a little bit more. And I won't say it was really a negative. Certainly I don't think it came out as a plus at all—made your name maybe be a little more recognized by a few more people. But the name recognition, it wasn't something I really needed to begin with much.

When Hollywood got hold of Tom Wolfe's book, they sort of hammed it up so bad, I thought. I didn't see it for about six months after it first came out. I heard from some of the other people who had seen it and told me about it, and I didn't want to go to see it. So I finally saw it at last. But anyway, it was not the documentary of the early space days that they advertised it to be in fact. And I think the way it came out, the way the characters were portrayed in the movie, for me it was not a big plus, let's just put it that way.

THOMAS: If I recall, it wasn't a real box office hit at that time?

SEN. GLENN: I don't remember how it came out at the box office. But anyway, it's been around. They pick it up and show it occasionally even today on TV. I see it replayed once in a while or see it advertised to be replayed. Let me say one thing. As entertainment, it was fun. If you just went to the movies to be entertained. But as far as being a documentary, which is the way they advertised it, it was far from being a documentary, although

there a number of events in it, of course, that were very true events. But the way they played these events off, it was not a real true form. Not true to the way that I saw it.

THOMAS: You had mentioned earlier about trying to get back, or not having a chance to get back to Washington to sit down in some strategy meetings. You were on the road too much. How was that travel? You were traveling, literally, for about two years.

SEN. GLENN: We were, yes, at least a year and a half. We would travel, travel, travel. We tried to take one day off a week, but that never worked, rarely worked. So you took a little time off once in a while. But, you just have to learn to pace yourself a little bit. I guess my training, my military training and astronaut training, I guess, lead me to be pretty resilient in that regard as far as travel and the stress of travel and all that.

Annie joined me on a lot of the trips. She was with me on a lot of the travels and that worked out fairly well, too. I was away from the kids longer than I wanted to be—Dave and Lynn. But when they had breaks, they came on the campaign trail with us part of the time. In fact, that's where Dave met his wife, Karen. They were married and have been married however many years it is now. And I have two grandsons. So that's another good thing that came out of the campaign.

But the travel is something you sort of get used to. And you've got to remember, too, that you have a lot of people helping you on something like that. When you go someplace, they automatically have you checked

into the hotel. You're there, you just go to your room. Unless you have meetings scheduled, you probably have your meals served in your room where you can go over your notes and things like that, and make the best use of your time. And then when you are ready to leave they have somebody there with a car ready to take you to the airplane.

Most of the campaign, in most of that time period, we did have our own airplane. And I don't think you can conduct a modern day campaign without having your own airplane. Part of the time you have a turbo prop airplane, and part of the time a jet. That helps out a great deal because you couldn't make all of those stops that you had to make without having your own airplane to travel. That gives you time on that airplane, also, to go through notes if you have a speech coming up.

I'm not trying to minimize the intensity of it because there's nothing as intense as a presidential campaign. Getting ready for events, and the speeches coming up, and you're trying to think two stops ahead. And you're making sure you know which town you're in, literally. I think out of all that campaigning that we did all over the country, I think there was only one time I mixed up the town. I was in Texas and I forget whether it was Amarillo and I said how glad I was to be in Abilene today, or maybe it was the other way around, I was in Abilene and said how glad I was to be in Amarillo. [Laughter] People got a big kick out of it.

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

THOMAS: Senator, we were talking about campaigning and being on the road for a long time. Was this something, as far as meeting the crowds and talking to the crowds, campaigning, was this something that you enjoyed or was that something that you sort of had to go through?

SEN. GLENN: I enjoyed getting to tell people what I believed and what I thought, and hoping I would get a good response. Because that's what the whole thing was all about. As far as just the personal attention of being out there campaigning, that didn't appeal to me. But the idea of having a crowd, or, like in New Hampshire—I think we spent more time in peoples' homes up there than big crowds. But you're putting across your ideas. You're hoping they'll respond. You're asking questions. They are querying you on different things. That's what campaigning is all about and that part of it was exhilarating. That was fine and I enjoyed that.

As far as just being out and having to go through another reception line and shaking another 500 hands before you do anything else, is that appealing? No, it's not. You actually get, when you are campaigning like that, you get calluses on your hands from shaking hands. I know that a lot of people enjoy campaigning like this and they say they just enjoy being out and seeing people and shaking hands with them. Well, that's fine and if it is for a purpose that's good. But if it's just a personal aggrandizement thing where you're getting that extra attention that wasn't it for me. If it

was going to put my ideas forward and get support for that, then that was the major attraction for campaigning.

The part of campaigning that I really don't like, and I never liked all during my Senate years, and don't like yet, and is a factor why some people have refused to run again, is just the fundraising. That's something you have to do all of the time. It was a rare day during the campaign that I didn't have a list of people I was supposed to call to ask for money for the campaign. I won't say we had a fundraiser event every day, but it would come close to that, some event almost every day. It was either a luncheon, or a dinner, or a meeting of supporters of some kind, wherever you were across the United States, in which you're telling them what you need the money for—getting on TV because of so and so in Georgia or Arkansas or some place. And you have to do that. You always have your campaign advisers or strategists and people like that who were doing polling. Polling is expensive. But to run a national campaign, you put a great deal of effort into fundraising, and I never did enjoy that.

As I've told people before, I'd rather wrestle a gorilla right here on the floor rather than ask anybody for a couple of bucks. And that happened during the Senate years as well as the presidential campaign. My staff used to have to force me to go out of my office and go over to the Democratic headquarters where they had a little booth set up with a phone in it. There was note paper and the reason for going over there was because by federal law you're not allowed to campaign out of your office.

You cannot make phone calls asking for money. You can't make any kind of campaign phone calls from your office.

So they'd have to drive me over to the Democratic headquarters and I'd have my list that they wanted me to call for that day. They would have all the notes on there, the last time I had called, and who had been in touch with that particular person or that particular group, when, what the results were before, and how much they'd suggest I ask for. And so you go through that. I just hated to do that. I didn't like that at all. They used to have to almost force me to go do that. But today, in modern day politics, that's what you do. You have to have money to run on unless you just want to pay for your own campaign, which not many people do or can. And that's not right in our society.

You say that anybody can run for public office. Well, that's right. Maybe you have the right to run for public office. You could run your primary campaign and let people be on their own completely. But once they get the nomination of their party, then I think running for federal office, House and Senate, I think we should have money provided like it used to be. We had an adequate way for running for the presidency and we had a certain amount we'd give them. People normally did not go outside that. Well then, it got around to where that wasn't enough money to do it, to run properly. So people raised their own money and refused to accept any federal funding. But I still think federal funding is the way to go for the federal races, once you reach the general election. Let people

concentrate on the issues of the day and get their views out there, rather than having to spend part of each day raising money. That's the way it is now.

THOMAS: I imagine you would get quite a range of responses with what was necessarily cold calling.

SEN. GLENN: You would get extremely different responses. I'll say this. Most people are not offended that you call them. I guess I was always sort of surprised that a little bit of cold call, just a cold call to somebody you had never met, and never talked to before, those were hard. But if you're running and people have heard your name at least, and in a way, I suppose with any campaign, whoever the candidate is, an individual is sort of complimented that a candidate for high office would give them a call. And so it's not all negative. You'd get a few people that would just say, "Sorry, I don't want to participate," and hang up. And that's it. Well okay, you go on to the next one. I happen to think right now of a little joke about the little old lady who says, "I never contribute because it only encourages them." [Laughter] Now why did I think of that? Somebody told me that a long time ago.

THOMAS: Did you ever stop and sort of contemplate your 1970 senate campaign when you lost the primary and your 1984 presidential campaign? Do you see any parallels between those two campaigns?

SEN. GLENN: I don't think there's a whole lot of parallels. There may be some. But I don't think there's a lot. You're talking about the one I lost to Howard?

THOMAS: Yes

SEN. GLENN: In the primary? Howard Metzenbaum in the primary, yes. Howard had been a stalwart of the Democratic Party across Ohio for his whole life. He contributed to every Democratic organization. I came in, while my name was known, coming into that race, I didn't have that kind of connection with the Democratic Party. And this was a primary we were involved with. Howard had loyalties from all the unions that he had worked with for years. He was a union lawyer for a long time and so he had connections beyond anything I had.

I was coming out of the space program. While my name was known, in Democratic circles, probably because of all the publicity around the space program, I was not that well known as a party stalwart and didn't have the money. Howard spent a lot of his own money in that and I didn't have money to spend in that campaign. I'm not making excuses but I think he outspent me by a lot anyway. I don't remember what the estimates were at that time.

We put on a pretty good campaign at that time. And once again, back to fundraising, I kept calling people at that time and there was an over confidence by a lot of people that had supported me. Because when I would call a lot of people back at that time, they'd say, "John, don't waste your money in the primary, you're a shoe-in in the primary," which I didn't believe. They'd tell me, "After the primary is over then we're really going to get behind you and have lots of money. We'll really

support you in this thing." So I made an awful lot of calls that resulted in not much money. So that was a factor in this. But the main thing was that Howard was a good campaigner and he's been around the Democratic Party for a long period of time.

I think another thing, one of the things that happened just before that election; I don't know whether this was a factor or not. Remember the Kent State shooting of the students? That happened the day before the election. And Howard had been absolutely—that was all involved with the Vietnam War and so forth. Howard had been very, very much against the Vietnam War, said so at every stop, and that was that, period. I had said that my stand on it had been more that I—the reason for the war, which was the not the same, my view was not the same as Howard's on the reason for the war and supporting that. Mine was more in the way that the war was conducted—if we going to do it, we should go and win it and come home. This thing had been drug out too long even back then. I don't know whether in that one day's time period there was enough feeling that I was wrong on the Vietnam War that it had changed the vote or not. I have no idea.

But Howard and I, he ran a good race and I lost by 13,000 votes I think in that one, which was—I think that's just about one vote per precinct all over Ohio. So it was a pretty tight race even at that. But I lost. So then I had to make a decision at that time, was I going to stay and run again or not? And there wasn't scheduled to be another Senate seat

coming up—at that time we had another four years, I guess, before another seat would be up. I had to decide, and I was in the business world at that time and finally making a little bit of money that I had never had before, so did I want to continue or did—I guess in my own mind, do I really believe what I've been saying about the importance of public service and the importance of these issues that I think are better for the country.

So we decided that, while I wasn't going to drop out of business, I was going to spend as much time, in effect, going all over Ohio and becoming as acquainted with every Democratic organization in Ohio as I could. And that's what we did. Annie and I came back and we traveled all over the state. Every Democratic organization in the state, whether it's the state level on down to local city groups or community groups, they're always looking for speakers. I was much in demand to come and talk at these things. And I did. We accepted almost all of them. We were on the road a lot and by the end of that next four year period, why I had been to most all of the major Democratic organizations in Ohio. I had a personal relationship and knew the head of the organization and was in much better shape to run a campaign than I was the first time.

THOMAS: At the end of your 1984 Presidential campaign, you ended up some three million dollars in debt. That is your campaign committee was in debt. How complicated did it turn out to pay off that debt?

SEN. GLENN: Very. Once again, back to money. That's the most obnoxious part of politics, particularly when you have a debt like that left over. We made a

very major effort to try and raise enough money to pay that off. There is nothing quite as unattractive as a just-defeated candidate as far as money contributions go, so that was very difficult raising money.

I had already at that time put in all I could put in legally. A candidate is limited, and so I put all that I could put in. We even petitioned the Federal Election Commission to let me put more of my own money in to help pay some of that off. I didn't have three million dollars to put in for the whole thing. They, for the first time, granted permission to do that. So we put some more money in. Annie and I put some of our own money in to paying that off. We wanted to make sure that the small vendors, for instance, the people, not the big bank loans, but those with the smaller vendors, all got their money. And with what we raised and what we contributed, we were able to do that.

Now we still had the money to the banks and the banks were quite happy. They could write some of this off as bad debt, which is usually the case in what they do after some of these campaigns, or had done at that time after some of these political campaigns. So we had an agreement from the banks that they would accept the payments that we could make, and they settled for that and take the rest as a bad debt, and that was it.

Well, the FEC would not let them do that for a long period of time, not until the campaign had been wound up for a long, long time, and no money is coming in. So that's where we are, that's how it was finally let go. It finally was settled. But none of the small vendors, none of the staff

and people like that, were hurt. They all got their money. The only thing that was ever written off on that was some of the bank loans that they had agreed to a long time ago. There was a little consortium, I think it was four banks, had agreed to this. I think the FEC finally approved that. But that was very difficult and I didn't like that at all, and I was afraid we weren't going to be able to raise enough to really take care of the small vendors, and that's what I was concerned about.

THOMAS: Is there any aspect of the Presidential campaign that we haven't covered that you'd like to comment on?

SEN. GLENN: I don't think so. I think back about that time period there and I think we've hit most of the things on it. A couple of the other things—another couple of reasons I didn't like some of the things Reagan had been doing.

I remember a big issue at that time, the Iran Contra, with the Sandinistas and Nicaragua and the money that was being quietly, wrongly put down there. I disagreed with that strongly, because I thought the people Reagan was trying to support at that time were basically the big land holder people down there, who were already holding too much sway, and didn't agree with what they were doing.

Another issue with Reagan that I didn't mention before, I think this was sort of the rise, the time period when the rise of the far right was coming up. There was a lot of activity in what's been called the Christian right. Not all Christian but a lot of other people involved, too. But that was a big issue and it was one of the fringe groups that I thought was

getting influence beyond anything ever intended by the Constitution of the United States. You would almost think that our whole place in the world at that time was going to depend on gay rights and abortion and issues like that. But they are important and I understand peoples' feelings and the importance of those issues to them.

But were they more important than international issues, than war and peace and security and our standing in the world visa vie the Soviets and was there going to be nuclear war? Those are things that I had concentrated on in the Senate, things like were we going to have nuclear war and how do we get a balance with the Soviets, is it going to work here, and trying to work out some of the SALT things we talked about earlier when Carter was President. Just all the bigger issues I thought were so important that we should not let the fringe issues really dictate policy for this country. They are very important and we have to deal with them. But I thought it could be done in a different way than what was being done.

That was another thing I disagreed with Reagan on. Reagan was a great person, most congenial person that I ever ran into. But I disagreed with his idea that this country should become, government should become, as small as he wanted it to become. I guess maybe going way back to several interviews back here when we talked about when I was growing up, I guess, in the Great Depression affected me somewhat along those lines, too. What is important and what is not for a lot of people. We

almost lost our house, and FHA came in and solved this with the loans lengthened out. WPA and some things like that, where I think government does provide a role.

I think my view of government is to provide more opportunity for people. We do that mainly through education and we do it through research and learning new things that form businesses. That's a little formula by which we led the rest of the world. I felt particularly strong, very strongly about it when Reagan had proposed some cuts in education and cuts in research. I thought that that was just like cutting off the future of this country, because other nations were going to step into that gap. So, those are some of the things that led me into what I was trying to do in that national election.

THOMAS: I'd like to switch topics just a bit here at the end of this session. You just last weekend gave the commencement address at The Ohio State University. You had given one earlier 25 years ago. I thought maybe you'd like to comment on your experience this past weekend.

SEN. GLENN: Well, it was a good experience. You know, President Gordon Gee at The Ohio State University asked me to give the commencement speech. I had given one year about 25 years ago. And so out of your archival efforts here we found that old speech, and I thought maybe that would be a good one to modernize a little bit and give that same speech or a version of it, not just the same speech. Well I found when we looked back through that speech, I guess maybe out of that '84 campaign, when I gave the speech

here at Ohio State 25 years ago, I think I must have been a little smarting still from the defeat in that campaign, because I found that I had worked in a number of things about foreign policy and some of these things out of the campaign with Reagan. I apparently had not gotten over it at that time.

Anyway, I sort of started over with some new remarks this time. But my remarks this time were—and I could run through the basic part of it—was that I challenged the students. The graduates, of which there were some 8,400 at one graduation ceremony in the stadium, which I understand is the biggest graduation ever in the country, at a major university. I think that is what President Gee said the other day. Anyway, it was a big thing with 50,000 or 55,000 people estimated in the stands there. So it was a big crowd.

My view was I said I hoped that this graduating class would become the greatest, why not, the greatest graduating class of all time. The "why not" was based on something that I have liked as a little slogan, as a quote, for a long time. It goes back to my association with Bob Kennedy. He had used it some times. It was a quote by George Bernard Shaw. One of Shaw's, and he was a Nobel Laureate, of course. In some of his writings he had said, "Some people see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and I ask why not?" In other words, curiosity and being willing to look into the new and the untried and a different way of doing things or a new way of doing things. That's the way we get to a good future.

If you think about it, new advances in whatever field we're thinking about are not made by calling a committee together, or a consortium, or some group of people of some kind. Your advances forward come because one single person, one person had an idea. And that's been true since the cave men first stepped out of the cave. Somebody had to come up with an idea, "Hey, here's an idea, why don't we try this?" And he may present it to a committee or a consortium or whatever it is. But that idea, every idea that's brought us any progress at all in the whole history of the world, has been because somebody, one person, just like the students I was talking to, and I told them that, just like you, has thought about some new idea and went ahead and put it forward.

I sort of challenged them a little bit and I said, "Has this worked in the past?" I thought, "Well, let's look at communications. That's important to everybody. Has it worked in the past?" And so I said, "Well, when I was kid in New Concord, when I was a teenager, and I was smitten by Annie Castor." We were steadies and this was my early teen years. And Annie and I, we really went steady at an early age. I think we started sort of pairing off in about the 8th grade and were steady ever since.

So I said, "When I wanted to go in my home and communicate with Annie, I had to go out in the hall and there was a box on the wall and I had to pick up the receiver and put it my ear, and grind a crank on the side of that box, and that sent a signal to the operator. The operator would answer and say number please. I would say number 3134." I happen to

remember Annie's number to this day all these years later. When Annie and I were talking, this was a party line. The operator then would ring the code for Annie's number which was so many long and so many short rings on Annie's party line, which they all were in those days. Then when she and I were talking on the phone, other people could pick up the phone and listen if they were on our party line. Okay, that's the way it was. There was a big thing in New Concord—New Concord had really moved into big time in our view when they got dial phones, finally.

Well, contrast that with something that happened just a very few months ago. On my cell phone a call came in and said, "Hi, John Glenn, this is Scott from outer space." And there was a laugh, but it was not a joke. It was Scott Parazynski, who I was on the space flight with in 1998. He's back up on another flight—this was a few months back. They're working to repair the solar panels on the space station, an actual space station. They were planning to come back to Earth, re-enter, and come back to Earth the next day. They were packing up and he had a few minutes between jobs and so he called.

You've got to think about this as a contrast. Me, back in my own lifetime talking to Annie, and here Scott is up there talking to us. He's traveling at 17,500 miles per hour, which is almost five miles a second, just under five miles a second. He's halfway around the Earth. The signal goes to a TDRS, a technical data relay satellite, is transmitted from that to Houston. Houston puts the signal on land line. That comes up to the cell

phone circuitry here to my cell phone, and here I am talking to him halfway around the Earth. That's an example of what curiosity can do.

Okay, how about another area of curiosity that we could use as an example? Let's see, what was the second one I used the other day? You have communications and transportation. Think about what's happened because of curiosity in transportation. Back in World War II days I had orders to the west coast and was going to go on my first airline trip to the west coast. The most direct route and the fastest you could get to the west coast was from Columbus here, where I was on leave on the way to the west coast, and go from Columbus to Indianapolis to St. Louis to Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles. Finally after seven stops—whatever that was, seven stops I think it was—I wind up in San Francisco in just under 24 hours. That was the most rapidly you could go to the west coast. Now, standard, you can get on a jet and travel coast to coast in five hours plus or minus a little bit. That's quite normal. So that curiosity was worth it.

How about medicine? In medicine, Sir Alexander Fleming was curious about what? About mold, plain old garden variety mold. Developed in a Petrie dish, but very similar to what would be on any mold on garbage. He was very curious about the way the rings formed. I couldn't imagine anything less interesting than being curious about mold. But he was curious about this and ran experiments and discovered the benefits of Penicillin, which started our whole antibiotic industry. So it

has led to more longevity, and for the students, every individual student there, longer and healthier life. But we could go and on with examples like that where we end with a healthy life.

Well, it's not only enough to have a healthy life, but you want to have an enjoyable and productive and, you might even say, a happy life. Then under that, you're going to be—I think we're all happier and lead more productive lives if we're part of something bigger than ourselves. For a lot of people that could be church work, or synagogue, or cathedral or whatever, civic work, or military, or something where you're part of something that is bigger than just yourself. I think too many people almost see themselves in a world unto themselves. If their attention is focused just on themselves, if that's their world as I said the other day, I think, if their world is just themselves, they live in a pretty small universe. So it's good to part of something big, that's bigger than yourself.

Another one—add to that another element. This comes back to the idea of happiness, again. Our School of Public Affairs over here, its motto is to "Inspire Citizenship, Develop Leadership." It gives an annual award for excellence in public service to someone for the job they have done. This year's award, we gave about two months ago, to Senator Tom Carper, a Senator from Delaware, a great public servant. He was a graduate of Ohio State University, went through here on a ROTC scholarship, did Navy duty and stayed in the reserves, and became a Navy captain in the reserves. He ran for public office, worked his way through a

number of state offices, and wound up as a two-term governor, was head of the National Governor's Association, and is now in his second term as a United States Senator. He's done a magnificent job. So we awarded him, gave him the award.

In his response, he talked about this idea of happiness. I thought it was a good example to use in this speech, which I did. In his response to being awarded this he said he received a message from a student, a letter from a student. In Tom's mailroom there they usually form up a tentative answer and some suggestions for it before it comes down to his attention. In this one, the answer to this letter or the question that the student had asked, they had no idea what to put in it. The question was, "What is the biggest factor in happiness?" He said he had to think about that a little bit because is happiness all money or is it prestige or what is it? He said he thought a little bit and he took the paper and his answer to this was just two words that he wrote in the middle of the page, "serve others," and sent it back.

I concur with that. I think that's it. I think you get more satisfaction in public life out of having served others and made life better for others than anything else you can do. So not only being part of something bigger than yourself, but also be willing to serve others. And that was the basic message.

I added a little bit on the end of it the other day. It just happened that Sunday when the commencement took place was also Flag Day,

National Flag Day. I talked about what the flag means. Actually the flag is just a piece of cloth, a pretty piece of cloth but it stands for a lot more. It stands not only for—basically stands for in the big picture without getting down to the constitutional specifics—it stands for what we have in that last line that we have in the Pledge of Allegiance. We state the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, etc., one nation indivisible. And then the six words on the end of that are something we all ought to remember: "With liberty and justice for all." Liberty what? To run wild like a wild animal? No, no, no. Liberty for opportunity.

That's something this country has that nobody else has. It's the liberty of opportunity for every single person to get an education, marry, not marry, change jobs, move from one place to another. It is opportunity as you see it in your own life, whatever your talents and capabilities and ambitions are in this country more than any place else in the world, you can do that. So it's liberty of opportunity and justice of equality. Doesn't make any difference what your religion is, doesn't make any difference what your ethnic background. You can come from any continent around the world and we're saying that you'll get the same justice under the law that everybody else gets: liberty and justice for all; the liberty of opportunity and the justice of equality.

So I started out with some men see things and say "Why" and I dream of things that never were and state "Why not?" and that kind of curiosity is what moves the world forward. For your own benefit, for your

own life, be part of something bigger than yourself and be willing to serve others of all the things you do. And meanwhile, it will all be done under that liberty and justice for all. That was almost as long as the speech the other day. [Laughter] But I think those are the main points I covered and I liked it. I think it was good advice for the kids. These aren't kids. These are men and women going out wherever they go.

THOMAS: Annie got an honorary degree, a well deserved degree.

SEN. GLENN: Well, that meant a lot to her. Annie, all the time I was in the Senate, Annie was very active back here in Ohio. Some of these child abuse organizations she was in and was very active. There was a spousal abuse organization for a while. Ohio nursing homes talked to her once and she spent a week, or I guess it was about two weeks, going all over Ohio visiting nursing homes. She didn't just visit them; she checked in and stayed all night to see how the people there were being treated. That was something new. Nobody had ever done that before.

Then of course Annie's unusual, too, in that, I don't know how many people know she was an 85% stutterer for most of her life. Eighty-five percent of the words she would try to say she had a hang-up on. So back in the early 70's she went through a different type of program at Hollins College at Roanoke, Virginia that we had seen one morning as a new way of treating stuttering. We saw it on the Today Show, I think. So she went through there and was able to—she always had to work on it, but she was able to overcome the stuttering enough now that she is able to

give speeches, and at Ohio State here she is an adjunct professor in speech pathology. She goes over a number of times a year and meets with people doing graduate work, getting their masters and doctoral in speech pathology. Because she knows what it's like. They love to have her come over and do that and she enjoys doing it.

So you put all of that together and Ohio State, Gordon Gee, and the Board of Trustees thought she was worthy of a special notice, special honorary degree for public service. And I do, too. I think she was well deserving of it. It meant a lot to her. So it was a great day—quite a weekend. We had a lot of friends that we sent invitations to, not knowing whether they would really want to come or not. And some of them came quite long distances to get here. And our children were here, Dave and Lynn. So it was a great weekend.

THOMAS: Okay. Why don't we end with that. We'll pick up the Senate years next time around.

SEN. GLENN: Alright, good.