

This is an interview with Gwen Awsumb, City Councilwoman from Memphis, Tennessee. The interview was conducted on August 19, 1974 by Jack Bass and Walter DeVries. Susan Hathaway transcribed the interview.

JACK BASS: Are you a native of Memphis?

GWEN AWSUMB: My mother is a native and I came back here when I was 15, and I have been here ever since, so I consider myself a native.

J.B.: I know you have been very active in civic affairs as well as politics, but can you give us a summary of your political activity?

Awsumb: My political activity started in 1952 with the Eisenhower campaign. Before that time all Republican politics were in the hands of black leadership, and there wasn't even any place for a Republican voter in the primary. No primary Republican boxes other than in the black precincts. In 1952 there were a group of people who joined forces . . . not Republican, it was sort of embarrassing to be lined up with the Republicans in those days, but there were a group of people who took on the task of heading up the Citizens *for Eisenhower* separate and apart from the Republican organization. In fact the Republican organization was in existence. On the other side of Beale Street did nothing during the campaign. They just sat tight and hoped for the

best and then shared the benefits, but we didn't participate in their activities in '52 at all, and the results of '52 nationally and locally as far as Eisenhower votes indicated to us that there were hopes of building a second party, which was so desperately needed. Not only had we not had anything but the Democratic party, but we had political one man leadership for so long that the people in Memphis really had politically asleep for so long that they did not know how to react to the political process, how to participate. A tremendous number of registered voters were apathetic people in this community politically. They just didn't know, they didn't care, and they had been told so long . . . it took 15 years, and in fact I heard just the other day I wish Mr. Crump were here to tell me what to do, and this is the attitude that had been going on. But in '52 we had that success and then we began to try to build the second party.

J.B.: Did Eisenhower carry Shelby County?

Awsumb: Yes, and we formed a group called the New Guard Association, and we tried to create a base sufficiently strong to open boxes in the Republican areas that would have some Republican votes outside of the black areas, and you had a coalition between the old Democrat and the black Republican that was a little hard to break. They worked together and their election commission was made up of Democrats . . . in those days it was a three member commission, two Democrats and

one Republican, but the one Republican lined up with the Democrats. So they were resistant to any efforts to open the party down here and this took quite a long time. We attempted to run for the . . . open up spots on the State Executive Committee hoping, at that level, to make some leadway into the decision making process. I ran for the Executive Committee . . . State Executive Committee in 1954, and did not win. In 1956, when Eisenhower was running for re-election, I ran for state legislator and had the support vote of the newspapers, and in those days it was not the general election . . . we didn't have numbered positions . . . the top eight, we only had eight people in the legislature and the top eight were elected. I was ninth out of a field of about 20, but you know, I missed it and was pretty down on the thing. Then came a period of sort of . . . well in 1957 we felt that all the work that we had done was going down the drain and when the troops went into Little Rock because the reaction locally against Eisenhower and the Republican party was so terrible that we just felt that our efforts to elect local Republicans, and of course we had long since learned that the only way you can build a party is to start at the local level and run good candidates for office, and it was not until 1960 that . . . I mean not until 1966 that any local offices were won by the Republican ticket. In the meantime we were discouraged, but we didn't stop. I went to work for the Episcopal District pretty well full time, and so my political activity were

trimmed somewhat, but in the meantime I had been involved locally in development and improvement of local government, and had worked with a number of non-partisan groups to improve the local situation, and I was a precinct coordinator for the successful efforts of a long time opponent, Mr. Crump when he ran for Mayor, and that was just horrible. He was a Democrat, but our local races are not .

At that time I broadened my own personal political base because I happened to know an awful lot of people that I had not known before. By the time the 60's arrived, we had much more reason to try to revamp our local structural systems . . . our local government, and I participated in that effort. I served on the Charter Commission that we drafted a new form of government and because of my intense interest in its success along with two others, who also did that, ran for the Council in 1967, and was elected from the district. The second time that I ran, I ran at large and was elected by the largest vote of any councilman. The reason for that is that I served as Chairman of the Council in 1970 and it was a pretty trying year, and I got a lot of exposure and was able to meet people. I got to know even larger numbers of citizens across the community. In the meantime I did win a seat on the State Executive Committee in 1966. In 1964 I participated in the first race of Howard Baker when he ran for the last two years *[of the* ~~unexpired term of~~ *against* Estes Kefauver, and my main intent that year was . . .

I was still a Republican and wanted to participate, but I was not a Goldwater fan and I needed to find some [outlet] that would get me through 1964 [with the loyalty] of my own political friends, and so I turned to that, and it was very ironic that Howard Baker, Jr. was a new name to me, a stranger to me until 1964 and his father had been what I considered an arch-political enemy back in the '50's when we were trying to gain some kind of foot hold of even participation . . . not power to get hold of the party, but to be allowed to participate. We were simply not allowed for the longest time through the efforts of Carol Reese, Howard Baker, and Mr. Smith who is editor of the Knoxville . . . who is Chairman of the Executive Committee, Chairman of the party for the state, and it seems ironic to me that I could be so sold on [any] man that I felt [was against us] for the longest time, but never having been one to hold grudges anyhow, I did participate in that campaign and it's interesting to look back and see how difficult it was to get people to even listen to that young man in 1964. If we got two or three people together in a living room, we did real well. Then in '66 I participated again in his campaign and in '72 I took a larger role and [was his] campaign manager to West Tennessee to 23 counties. I also went to the convention [in Miami] in '72 and he never sat down in his seat the whole time. So I did participate in the convention what there was to participate in, and that

. . . I am now presently serving on a Presidential appointed National Council Agency which is on education, the Chairman of the Education Committee is on the City Council and I have been very interested in education and its direction, difficulties, problems, and the Council that I served on was the National Advisory Council of Equal Educational Opportunities, which I must confess I haven't explained fully to the local constituency what it actually is, but I have gained a great insight and service on it and have been able to make some contribution to that group . . . 15 member group, but that is the extent of my political activities.

J.B.: Then the beginning of the modern Republican party in Shelby County in Western Tennessee, to some extent, was the reaction to the Crump domination.

Awsumb: Yes, because we never had any election in November ever. It was all cut and ~~dry~~^{dried} in August after the primary was over. You had plenty of choice in the primary and the [Crump machine] explanation was that we give you plenty of choice, you know, in the primary. And when we call it the primary, they were just talking about the Democratic primary, and also another reason I think that it began to develop . . . I mean movement, we had a great deal of help increasingly over the years from people who moved in here from other parts of the country where they had two party systems, and we growing economically and industrially

business wise and many people began to come into the Memphis area and wanted to participate and continue to participate in the Republican party. That was their basic philosophy and that is what they wanted to do. So this provided a further development . . . interest for development in the Republican party, but yet basically the Crump domination had been so long and so tight that there was a restlessness underneath always. I can remember it as a child during dinner conversation, it was a restlessness under it, but no one seemed to have much . . . enough courage to buck the current situation . . . a few.

J.B.: What effect did the Goldwater movement have on the Republican party development both from Shelby County and in Tennessee? Let me be a little more specific. Did a lot of the people who came into the Republican party in '64 because of their attraction to Goldwater remain?

Awsumb: Many who came in on the Goldwater attraction left to support Wallace when he ran.

J.B.: Insofar as the . . .

Awsumb: Not all, but many.

J.B.: Insofar as the party structure itself in Shelby County.

Awsumb: The party structure was effected definitely. We have an awfully conservative wing in our local Republican party that is strong, is vocal, but seems to have diminished since . . . I would say since '68, it was probably '68, and

has diminished since that time, and I think one of the reasons for it is the leadership . . . the more temperant moderate leadership of Howard Baker and Winfield Dunn. Both of those people are not what you call the ultra conservative wing, and they have been dynamic in their leadership. They've been very magnetic in their leadership. They have attracted people to their way of thinking, and they are resonable, and they are middle of the road common sense and they think this has provided a steadier base for the Republican party and a more buildable base than the extreme conservative wing.

J.B.: Are the more conservatives in Shelby County more closely linked with Senator Brock? Is there a basically Brock faction ~~basically~~ a Brock faction within the party?

Awsumb: I would have to say that there are . . . you really couldn't tell . . . you really can't tell it significantly unless you were to have a head on confrontation between those two, then you would feel it . . . where the chips fell, but the Dunn people, what we call the Dunn people and the Baker people are by ~~the~~ ^{and} large [moderates]. The Brock people are more conservative, but they also have supported him in large numbers . . . Dunn and Baker, but that is because they have been running at different times, and yet an interesting observation came this year in the primary in as far as the Governors race was concerned, because Nat Winston's people were by in large Brock people and the Lamar Alexander and the ~~George Alcorn~~ ^{Dortch Oldham} both pulled from Baker - Dunn people which

worried me considerably because I felt personally I was a supporter of Lamar Alexander, but I had felt that with both of them in there that Nat Winston was going to walk in with it . . . that did not prove to be the case. It might have if he hadn't dreamed up that idiotic capital club right at the end of the campaign.

J.B.: Didn't Alexander carry every precinct in Shelby County?

Awsumb: Yeah.

J.B.: Would that be an accurate reflection then of the moderate wing of the party predmominating . . .

Awsumb: Yes. I think we have come back to a more . . . also, I have to confess that might not be as accurate if the . . . the two things I felt in the Winston campaign . . . number 1, he ran too long, he's been running since the '72 convention in Miami first started, and this is just too long to run for anything; number 2, his political suicide was caused by this idea of raising \$500 for a personal Governor's Club. I heard of numbers of people that were going to support him say . . . particularly the impressive atmosphere saying "how stupid can you get." He turned away from them so he lost (a lot of) support in the last three weeks.

J.B.: So that race is really not a clear cut indication.

Awsumb: It was not a clear cut indication.

J.B.: Were you involved in . . . or in your involvement in Baker's '72 race, what were the factors that went into his

relatively strong showing in the black community compared with previous Republican candidates on a state-wide basis?

Awsumb: Number 1, the anti-Blañton feeling in the black community, which I confess I am banking on in November, but this was . . . he is a has been and it has been portrayed to them as a very conservative person. Number 2, Baker had some national votes that were attractive to the black people. His stand on open housing had been of particular attraction to them, and number 2 (?) his participation and appointment not only participation but his ability personally to get Ben Hooks (?) appointed on ~~the~~ ^{FCC} (?) was attractive. I don't think the rank and file appreciated that, but the leadership in the black community did and the leadership pulled the rest of them with him in as far as telling him those who would not appreciate that fact, this person was supposed to vote for them, and I have to take some credit for it because I have a very good exposure to the black community. I've worked on this before Senator Baker and his aides. I carried every black precinct myself when I ran in the last Council election, black and white alike. So I have a good rapport with the black community and I used it to full advantage.

J.B.: Do you think Alexander will do as well in black precincts in Shelby County as Baker did?

Awsumb: No I don't. This concerns me, I don't. I think that he can get some, but I don't think that he can do as well, and I don't exactly know how to explain the

difference except number one, he doesn't have the record to point to or the votes that he had cast that would be of attraction . . . two, he has pretty much of a polished image. Senator Baker is a rather down to earth, easy to know person. He is comfortable in almost any situation. Lamar Alexander is also, but he is not known to them in any way and does come on with a slight reserve in my estimation. He looks sort of like a silk stocking boy, and he is tremendously smart and capable, but , no. This bothers me more than anything in this race this far.

J.B.: How do you ~~ass~~^{assess} the situation between the Republicans and blacks. How do you explain the fact that you are able to black support running as a Republican, and yet many Republicans say . . .

Awsumb: I didn't get them running as a Republican. That was a non-partisan race.

J.B.: But you were perceived . . .

Awsumb: There is no question in the communities mind as to whether I am Republican or Democrat, but well, it's a very hard question to answer, and there still exists a tiny segment of the remainder of what they used to call the Lincoln mood in the black Republican group under Lieutenant Lee, and one of the reasons that I . . . in 1956 when I ran for the legislature and made it through the primary in spite of Lieutenant Lee's opposition, once I had done that, and I was the only candidate that we had fielded on our side of the fence who came through the primary, Lieutenant Lee was faced

with backing the ticket or not backing the ticket, and he had a bunch of real nards on there from the black community as legislative candidates which he never . . . they were never serious candidates, they were only used in their little game back and forth, but I was there and I was very serious, and Lieutenant Lee did support me that fall, and I did get about 25,000 or 30,000 black votes, and I got more black votes than I got white votes. The total vote that I got was something around 56,000 or 57,000 votes, and of those at least half of them were black, and for that reason, I never turned against Lieutenant Lee in the party battles that ensued afterwards. They threw him out of the convention, they did all these things as a party, and I held my grounds in voting against doing anything because I had hoped to weld the thing together and use the broad base, and it's not my nature to, you know, turn it around and throw these people out. I think that we ought to be able to work together. And for that reason, I have maintained a respect and friendship from Lieutenant Lee that other Republicans have not been able to maintain. I think the early battles in as far as black and what they call the silk stocking Republican left their scares, but why now the Republicans are unable to broaden their base through the black community, I do not know. They tried in many ways. I think one of the . . . I think we are doing better, let me put it that way, I think we are doing

better, but it is a long long way and I haven't noticed that nationally blacks have been absorbed in any number in the Republican party. They seem to be more committed in principal in the party whether they know what they are committed to or not, but I mean their leadership is on that

J.B.: Has that been a response to Republican leadership on a national level?

Awsumb: I certainly think so.

J.B.: What would you advise President Ford to do in so far as developing policies to broaden the Republican base in the south? I don't mean necessarily toward attracting blacks, I mean to broaden the base of the Republican party in the South, where do you go?

Awsumb: Well I think . . . of course it is a little hard for me to answer that question because I am still a Republican in spite of President Nixon, and I view President Ford as a much warmer, approachable kind of person, and he's been here many times, and he's been, I am sure, in other southern areas many times as far as fund raisers and various group and party functions that we've had. So, if the rest of the south feels the same as the local party I would say that the South now feels that they have someone in the White House that they know, and respect, and thought they were going to get a long time ago, but didn't have, and I think that some of his appointments from the choices in the

South could reflect a low-keyed, strong, people concern image. I've never been a believer in going out and saying "I'm going to do all these things for you, I love you and I think this is great, and you need all these things." But the day to day people concern voting record, projection and ideas, projects and programs that really deal with the guts of peoples needs, without making a big cry over it gets to people a whole lot better than a big advertising type image, and I think that he can project his . . . I think he is a person who shows a concern for all people, and I think Nixon kept saying this, but he never showed it, as far as I can see. I have no definitive suggestion or procedure for President Ford to broaden the base of the party in the South except to follow through on his appointment of people and execution of programs to follow through on what he has indicated thus far as the type of person that he is, and the way he believes about things. That'll get him pretty far.

J.B.: How would you say . . . the plot at this specific situation . . .

Awsumb: The first thing that he could do would be most acceptable to the . . . and I say this with utmost prejudice and of course, I know you recognize it, would be to appoint Howard Baker as Vice-President. This, to me, is an obvious direction that would more than satisfy the South in spite of the fact that many of the party members

in the South felt that Howard Baker was not sufficiently pro-Nixon during the Watergate hearings. There was quite a bit of criticism from the South on that point, but I think that has dispersed with the revelation that came with the Only the hardened, unseeing people still hold that against him, but byinlarge, he's a most popular man, number two, his position has always been one of a moderate philosophy and a deeper concern approach, and I feel this was most helpful not only to President Ford, but to the party.

J.B.: How about the President's attitude on say something like OEO. President Nixon wanted to abolish it, which appealed to a lot of conservative southerners and elsewhere many perceived it as sort of a . . . not necessarily part but at least consistent with the southern strategy aimed at brining conser . . . trying to woo conservative Democrats into the Republican party.

Awsumb: Well I feel that . . . I understand that approach, but I think to abolish a program like OEO on the basis that you explained is a great mistake. I think the same thing can be accomplished . . . number one, I think a program like OEO has passed its prime. It has lost its effectiveness, its become so bureaucratically intertwined and tangled up . . . I've dealt with it and I know, and I think any of these kinds of programs need to get their maximum benefit from the idea that started them, but when they start going down hill then they should be revived, turned around and name

something else . . . don't say we are going to throw it out in order to attract a conservative vote over here, but the same programs . . . not the same programs, but merited programs . . . programs that have come through and shown some benefit and some use can be revised and handled in a new agency. You have to constantly attack problems from different sides in new ways, and for the blacks to say that we will always want the OEO is ridiculous, and they can be sold on a new idea which embodies somewhat of the same types of the conscience.

J.B.: Is there a distinction between the Republican party in West Tennessee, particularly Shelby County, and say the Republican party that is concentrated in the third district?

Awsumb: In the third district? No, the state party has been pretty well . . . pretty cohesive, and I think this has got to be said because we could never have achieved two Senatorial races, and a Governors race if we had not had real good cooperation throughout, and there are regional differences, but there are regional differences everywhere. I doubt if the party in the third district really is as strong as the party in Shelby, if that is the area you were talking about. The Republican party per se . . . it limped along back in the days when we were trying to form a base, the agency had much more than we did. We were both outsiders in those days. The first and second district just held tight

to the whole thing.

J.B.: Was as much emphasis placed in Shelby County in developing these really tight grass roots precinct level organizational base in Shelby County as it was in Hamilton?

Awsumb: Yes.

J.B.: Were the two movements linked directly, or was it . . .

Awsumb: No, they were not.

J.B.: . . . developed independently.

Awsumb: I expect that one of the reasons that Hamilton County developed their precinct organization was through the direction and cooperation, under close supervision of Bill Brock who is one of the best organized persons I have ever known in my life. That is his top field . . . he's great, his office is well organized, his whole organization is just top flight, and earlier before Bill Brock came upon the scene, earlier Republicans had started precinct organization and we worked on it as we opened up other areas of the city in the party and our precinct organization was, and is a very good organization, very well organized, and I would say came to its fullest in 1966. That is when it really came to the . I mean all the little holes and gaps were closed with people . . . we had a precinct organization for a long time which you couldn't get a captain in this precinct, you couldn't get an area chairman over here, so you just forgot that and went on with what you had.

But it was pretty well complete in 1966. Obviously, we still have some gaps as far as black precincts are concerned, but even there we've made progress in the last seven years.

J.B.: Do you mean there is a closer . . . more potential for a Republican and black coalition of winning black support for Republican candidates in Shelby County than say Hamilton?

Awsumb: I really can't answer that question, and I don't see any strong indication of a coalition in Shelby County between the Republicans and blacks.

J.B.: The coalition is probably too strong a word.

Awsumb: Yeah, because there is some local black leadership that is so activist and so . . . I am searching for the word . . . so liberal Democrat that potential of any kind of coalition between the Republicans and blacks would be pretty far fetched.

J.B.: How do you evaluate the effectiveness of Fred Davis on Council?

Awsumb: Fred Davis is a very effective member of the Council. Whether the blacks consider him effective or not, I know that he feels sometimes that he is considered Uncle Tomish, but he fights hard for his people, but he is a concerned person with the total community, and he feels what is good for Memphis is good for the blacks. So, that is his commitment and he fulfills it very well . . . more

active liberal black do look upon him as not using his office to their advantage sufficiently, however, I have noted since my experience in public life and since the blacks have achieved office status . . . elected status locally, that once their member has . . . a member of their group has achieved it, they begin to turn against him, and this has been indicated several times, and whether it will be fatal to Fred, I don't know. So far he has great respect of white community as most of them as well as leadership in the black community and rank and file activist in the street. I think Fred has moved out and beyond them and above them, but he is an effective member on the Council because he can project to us, for our information in dealing with decisions. The black view point at the same time, he can understand other factors that need to be considered, and it is most helpful in making decisions to have a reasonable practical approach to matters from the black viewpoint.

J.B.: Are the conservative Republicans who ~~are~~ ^{are} work supporters of F and actively campaigning for Winston moving actively into Alexander's campaign in Shelby County?

Awsumb: I don't know. I was not actively engaged in Alexander's primary campaign because of my association with George Odum and Alexander. I didn't want to anger either camp because I may have some further ambitions of my own, which I didn't care to get any flurries going. So

I just stayed out of that one, plus the fact that I was very fond of both of them and I didn't want to hurt either one of their feelings, but I was a supporter.

J.B.: What sort of ambitions would you have? I mean . . .

Awsumb: Well I do have to run on a city wide race next year one way or the other, and whether I run again for the city council or run for mayor remains to be seen, and there is conversation about that. I am waiting to see how some other women across the country fair. I came very close to it three years ago . . . running, and a local situation prevented me at that time from running, and I sort of regreted it afterwards. The climate was such that I thought it might be possible, but several surveys which I had taken at that time indicated, you know, still some heavy resistance to a woman, and those feelings had seemed to be tempered in the last several years, and now whether they really are or not, I expect to be indicated by . . . I am real interested to see what happens to Mrs. Grasso in Connecticut and several others who are running.

J.B.: Do you consider Jane Hardaway's race significant insofar as your own plans are concerned?

Awsumb: Yes I think that Jane Hardaway's race will be a barometer of whether a woman is acceptable or not. I have a very broad base of support and enjoy a wide base of support.

J.B.: Do you work actively to encourage women to get involved in politics?

Awsumb: I do participate in some activities along those lines. I am not an active feminist.

J.B.: By whose definition?

Awsumb: By Gloria Steinam's definition or by Bella ^{Abzumb's} ~~Anthro's~~ definition, or the President of the Local Chapter of NOW. They despair with me and yet I have only got to show locally, and that's not my fault . . . I keep saying that people should . . . but I don't think that women make very good headway screaming and hollering and demonstrating and all of these things that some of them have done. I think their performance in anything else . . . a performance of a person whether it be female, or male merits either a people saying "well they don't do a very good job," or "they do a pretty good job, give them a chance to do something else." Woman are inclined to be, number one, too talkative . . . [Interruption]
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Awsumb: Well I just think that women have every opportunity to make it. It is a little more difficult. You do have to do your homework a little more heavily because they don't expect . . . people simply don't expect you to know anything about sewers, streets, or any of these things, and finances get pretty involved, but if you've come up in a field where you have learned these things, and you continue to learn, and you don't try to be an expert on every subject . . . I think that you can be quite

successful. There are many areas where the women are asked about whether Fred was an effective member of the Council, I expect that if you ask another member of the Council, or any member of the Council, how effective his participation on the Council, you would find that from a woman's viewpoint there is a contribution than women can make that is not just blatantly "the women's viewpoint", but it is an angle that has a little different angle to it than a man's viewpoint on any particular subject . . . like the development of down town, development of the river front, zoning . . .

J.B.: Give me an example of that on an issue.

Awsumb: Well . . . men seem to go off . . . for instance in the field of education they don't have some of the insights that . . . men are not as concerned, I don't believe, with their own childrens education as women are, and when women have been involved in education, they have insights into the whole broad subject. It gives just a little bit different flavor, and I have had a great deal of difficulty tempering the anti-educational feeling on the Council, which has stemmed from our budget problems. Their immediate reaction of our more conservative members of the Council are throw out all education . . . don't like bussing, therefore I am against education. There are a heck of a lot of kids still out there to be educated, and this is the problem that I have had at the last several meeting, and I have been able to modify their viewpoint enough to get the money passed for

education. In the development of the down town area there are things that interest a woman that they wouldn't think of that I have suggested put into the . I don't think it will be any great lasting benefit to humanity or anything, but it makes a better place to live.

J.B.: What would be some examples?

Awsumb: The buildings activity planned for to be included within the downtown mall. The constant pressure from me as far as the signs and the way things looked . . . this also may be because I am an architect's wife, and I am pretty conscious of how things look and how they ought to look. But I am in . . . I am on the downtown development committee council and we have gone step by step and approved various plans that have been unfolded, and there have been suggestions made by me and by others but this is a spot. The activities that attract the downtown shopper . . . this type of thing. As to any more specific than that, I cannot be. In zoning men tend to think of it truly from a financial aspect . . . financial and industrial viewpoint, whereas I looked at it as a total living community and keep plugging away for the more . . . I am interested in that economic development too, but I think we can't lose sight . . . I keep reminding them that we can't lose sight of the good community to live in . . . a person enjoys living in, playing

in, working in, getting educated in, and this zoning certainly has a big part in that.

J.B.: Do you have any feelings toward the State Republican party office in Nashville . . . the executive director's handling of that office insofar as services to the party are concerned?

Awsumb: No, I don't. I have criticism of it. I have not had sufficient close relationship with it to say really. I am not in a position to say . . .

J.B.: What is the type of criticism you have heard?

Awsumb: Well, number one, the first criticism I heard was about the arrangements made when we went to convention in 1972, but I don't know that . . . I never really felt that they were warranted because there was such confusion at the convention anyway. You couldn't have blamed Ron ~~Reigdorf~~ ^{Reitdorf} (?) for the bus tires being slashed just before we were . . . I mean bus fare, but some of his arrangements were a little bit out of sight and the plans that he hadn't followed through on, and as far as handling early in the gubernatorial campaign that Ron had showed favoritism to Lamar and had taken him around the state, and this came, of course, from the Winston camp . . . but I never actually so him do that and he never came into this district with him, so I really . . . I personally have no complaints with the way Ron has run it.

J.B.: How do you access Governor Dunn's administration?

Awsumb: I think that Governor Dunn's administration has been excellent. He has had a rough time with his legislature obviously, it was to be expected, but I think for a person to maintain their overall throughout the state, such as he has done, he certainly contributed to the success of his administration because by the time he was acting Governor for four years, if it has not been any good, you know it. As far as his popularity, even with the people in East Tennessee who loved to complain about some of the moves that he made, even

J.B.: There has been speculation and the analogy was made in yesterday's commercial appeal and the Ellington - Clement leapfrogging that this could develop again. Do you see that as a real possibility in Tennessee?

Awsumb: Yes I think it is a possibility and I think that . . . I think that it would be beneficial from the viewpoint of . . . I mean, I see nothing wrong with it as long we are limited to one term of four years. There is nothing wrong with it, and I would welcome the opportunity to see Winfield run again in four years. He certainly is not going back and cleaning teeth, that's for sure, and he has a lot of pluses as far as a politician is concerned . . . many pluses that shouldn't be wasted. If he wants to run for Governor again in four years, I think that is great.

W.D.:

Awsumb: Well one of the basic changes is the . . . I would say that the Democrat of a conservative nature . . . of a conservative philosophy have been, in some instances, been converted to the Republican party. In other instances have joined what they call the ranks of independents who voted in the general election with the Republicans and then what is left of the Democratic party is made up of liberal Democrats and blacks, and they have lost their effectiveness by not being able to hold on to any of their . . . much of their conservatives factions, for any practical purposes they have. There is still a deep embedded feeling in many people in Tennessee . . . I am sure it is probably even more so than Mississippi and Alabama and Georgia. But even in Tennessee . . . outside East Tennessee, there is some kind of a feeling in conservative Democrats who are life long and family long Democrats in this state, that they would drop dead if they voted in the Republican party, or joined the Republican party. I am sure they have voted Republican . . . possibly had the strength it would have shown in the polls in the last few years . . . we had an awful lot of people I am talking about in the secrecy of the ballot, but as far as joining forces with the Republican party, there is still a resistance based on an almost unnamed undefined feeling

against the party.

J.B.: What do you think would have to happen for the Democrats to carry Tennessee again in the Presidential election? Or, for the Republicans to lose in the Presidential election if you prefer to look at it from that perspective?

Awsumb: Well, I think either could happen . . . I think either could happen. I think the Democrats . . . well, let me put it this way, In 1976, the Republicans are going to have to present to us either a successful Mr. Ford, or some other Mr. Clean . . . and, I MEAN Clean, or the Democrats are going to have to . . . for them to win, are going to have at the top of their ballot a person of moderate persuasion and don't ask me for an example because I guess I'm . . . I just can't think of anybody of a moderate persuasion within the Democratic party. They are all either terribly conservative or very very liberal . . . maybe [one does] exist, but . . .

J.B.: Where do you put Scoop Jackson in that bid?

Awsumb: I think he's the worst opportunist I have ever seen in all my life. He makes me ill the way he is using the energy thing. I just think he is sickening. I think he is the biggest hypocritical nothing I ever saw. I used to think very well of him when he first came upon the scene. I thought highly of him. I think he has just

used things, or tried to use things to his personal advantage, which has really .

J.B.: The Republican presence in the legislature has remained more or less stable in the last six years or so in Tennessee. I mean there was a slight majority one year in the house, and then . . . but always . . . then the Republicans have suffered in the legislature because of the way lines are drawn in reapportionment . . . I mean I understand that that has been pretty partisan situation, but do you see Republicans moving into a dominant position in the legislature?

Awsumb: No I don't. I think . . . I don't understand why we have not been able to do it, and our . . . we lost . . . well, let me put it this way, one local legislator here was just beaten in the primary by another Republican and there is no Democratic candidate so that is the end of that, but he lost his race because of his lack of support for our Republican Governor, who is not only our Republican Governor, but he was our local Republican Governor, which peeved people off in the district, because he turned his back on the programs and stands which the Governor took, and this was the main reason that he was defeated. If we can't even use our own Republican legislators who are elected to support the programs that are put forth by the Governor, when he is a Republican, then how do we expect to elect more to support the Governor. I think we

have just about reached the potential of Republican support in the legislature as far as where is he going to get these Republicans . . . what district is he going to get them elected out of. I know that the Governor wouldn't like to hear me say that. . . [Interruption] . . . but he hopes to get a majority in there. I am not as optimistic as he is, I just don't feel it.

J.B.: Anything else you wanted to add?

(End interview.)