

ILOHI Interview with Janet Hibner

April 9, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana Via Phone

Interview by Ben Baumann

Transcribed by Ben Baumann and Otter.ai

MP3 File, Sony

Janet Hibner=JH

Ben Baumann=BB

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BB: [0:00:00] All right, so before we begin, I would just like to state for the record that today is April 9, 2021. And my name is Ben Bauman. I'm here in Indianapolis, Indiana. And I'm speaking via phone with Janet Hibner, who is in Richmond, Indiana. Is that correct?

JH: That is correct.

BB: And we're doing an interview for the Indiana Legislative Oral History Initiative. So just starting off when and where were you born?

JH: I was born in Lafayette, Indiana July 26, 1935.

BB: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

JH: Harvey Nelson and Alto (Unintelligible).

BB: Okay. And how long had your family lived in Indiana? [0:01:00]

JH: Forever. Were basically Hoosiers.

BB: Okay. Do you know where your family was before Indiana?

JH: Well, they I mean, I've done some genealogy, but the grandparents were in Indiana. And around Remington.

BB: Okay. Cool. And what were your parents' occupations?

JH: Well, my mother was a schoolteacher, but she was a schoolteacher. And she went back to work. She only had, you know, courses that you could teach on a six weeks introductory course, I think. I don't know. Anyway, she didn't have a full, you know, bachelor's degree. And but she taught school after we were big enough [0:02:00] to go to school too. And my dad once worked for my grandpa who had a hardware store. But that wasn't very successful because he didn't pay anything. And so, he eventually went to work for the Post Office Department. He was a clerk in the local office.

BB: Okay, interesting. And do you have any siblings?

JH: Yes, I have a brother, Max Nelson. Who was three years younger than I but he died at the age of 50.

BB: So how would you describe your childhood growing up?

JH: Well, my childhood was a typical, very small town, Remington is where I lived all of my early years. [0:03:00] And Remington is a town of maybe a 1000 If you blink two or three times. So, everybody knew everyone else. And you know, they knew my mother and she, as I say, lots of people, lots of students had her as a teacher. And it was pretty ordinary as far as a small town. You know, we could walk up town and buy things. We lived very close to downtown, which was one street, one walk. And so, you know, it was it was a sleepy little Indiana town. And so, we could go about any place. You know and be safe.

BB: Yeah. Okay. So, did you like growing up in a small town?

JH: Of course, yes. [0:04:00] Because I didn't know anything else. (Laughs)

BB: Okay, okay. So, you didn't like dream of going to like a city or something like that? Or?

JH: No, I don't think so.

BB: And who would you say were the most influential people in your childhood?

JH: Oh, I suppose my parents and one grandmother.

BB: And what made them so influential to you?

JH: I don't know.

BB: Okay, just because they're your parents I guess and.

JH: Yeah, you know, I don't nothing particular I guess I didn't again know any better. You know, I've been around all the time. But you know, we...it was a sleepy little town. (Both Laugh)
[0:05:00]

BB: Fair enough. Okay. Did you have much understanding about your family's political beliefs as a young child?

JH: No, not really. Except that when my dad got his postal job it was...I think it was when Roosevelt was in. So, I believe that they were Democrats. I mean, they never, we never talked about anything like that. But my guess is, that's what they were.

BB: Now, what schools did you attend as a child and teenager?

JH: Well, Remington Elementary School and Remington High School. (Laughs) You know, there were what [0:06:00] 18 or something in my graduating class. You get the idea, I mean sleepy little town before schools consolidated.

BB: You weren't kidding. That's, that's pretty tiny. Wow. And how would you describe your educational experiences there?

JH: Well, that was fine. I mean, I didn't know any better. And we didn't. I guess we didn't have you know, advanced placement or anything like that in the in that day. And but we had a basic curriculum to go to college. And we had Latin and I took Latin. (Laughs) But we had a crazy teacher as a Latin teacher. So that was useful. I'm deviating a little bit, but the grade [0:07:00]

school I attended was the old-style two-story building. And when you were in the upper grades, like, fifth and sixth grade, you went upstairs. And the elementary schools were downstairs. We would slide up and down the banister. If we could get by with it.

BB: Did you have any favorite subjects in school?

JH: Well, I was mostly supposedly science and math. You know, a long way from politics. Anyway, I was always an exceller and so. So, you know, I was miss goody two shoes.

BB: That's cool. Now, where did you attend college?

JH: I went to IU Bloomington. [0:08:00]

BB: And when you're growing up and becoming a teenager, and then going into college, did you have any views about the state of Indiana or about being a Hoosier?

JH: I really didn't. I mean, I'm about the farthest thing you would ever expect to be in politics. But anyway, no, I had wanted to go to DePauw but it's an expensive school. And yes I excelled, but my parents were basically not equipped to send me there. That's why and I wanted to get away from home. So, I went to IU Bloomington.

BB: Yeah. Okay. Sure. [0:09:00] And now, what was your major at IU?

JH: Well, it ended up being microbiology. At that time, it was called bacteriology. But so, I have a degree an AB in bacteriology, but today it would be known as microbiology.

BB: Wow. That's really neat. And so, I guess that just kind of stems from your interests in the sciences, then?

JH: Yes.

BB: Okay. And what were your thoughts about after graduation and what you would do with that degree?

JH: Well, I was gonna work. By that time. Let's see, I guess. I was married my senior year in college in the semester. So, I was gonna go to work. My husband was in medical school. And so, you know, I was gonna work to support him. [0:10:00] So, at that time, I think I interviewed one place. And that was Eli Lilly and Company. And that was when, I mean, you can't imagine this, but where you made an appointment, you went in, you talked to one individual. And he asked you a few questions. And you were either hired or not hired. I did that. And I was hired. And so anyway, you know, no, panel, no, all that stuff that you do today. So, anyway, it was a foregone conclusion. You know and so that's what I did. I worked in research.

BB: [0:11:00] Wow. And what was your research on?

JH: Well, we were doing, have you ever heard, I won't be able to think of it. There's a famous example of people stealing cancer cells for women, economically depressed women. And they didn't tell them. So, we were working on hela cells. And that's what the cells were called, that they stole from a woman in some other facility. And we were testing these hela cells to see if they had antibiotic capabilities to treat cancer, but that at the same time, we had an awful time

keeping the [0:12:00] hela cells growing because we were trying to grow them in test tubes. And half the time we weren't very successful. This was the beginning of antibiotic, kinds of tests. So, it turns out that we were working on methotrexate and methotrexate is now used for arthritis, I think. Don't quote me on any of that stuff.

BB: That's okay. Yeah, I understand, like, sort of the general idea, but that's, that's pretty wild. So, you were really, you definitely had a very interesting line of work after college.

JH: Well, I did. But you know, it became a lot more interesting later as I found out more about it.

BB: Yeah, yeah. Wow. Okay. That's, that's really cool. And when you were in college at IU, [0:13:00] were you a part of any clubs or organizations or anything or?

JH: I think I was a member of the YWCA. And I also belonged to a social sorority.

BB: And so, did you enjoy your time at IU?

JH: Yes, I did. It is completely different, obviously, from my hometown experiences. I did a lot of growing up.

BB: What about your awareness of politics? Did it change much when you went to IU? Did you start thinking more about it or?

JH: No, I was very apolitical. And so, [0:14:00] you'll find out later that I was in the right time, in the right place at the right time and really a fluke that I became a state representative.

BB: That's funny. All right. Fair enough. So, I guess your career goals after college and once you started working for Eli Lilly, were you just planning to stay there for a long time and continue to work there or what was?

JH: No, I was gonna stay there until my husband finished medical school. And then we went someplace else for his internship. And so that ended my work career. Because by then we had a child. And so, I didn't work anymore.

BB: Okay. And how many children did you have? [0:15:00]

JH: 2

BB: Two, okay. So, I guess let's jump into how you got involved in politics. So how did this all start?

JH: Well, I had, we had good family friends. And at one point in time, we were having a, you know, just a social gathering. And he said that well, he was going, he was involved in county politics. County, this is, and he was going to try and defeat the current county chairman. And I didn't know what I was talking about, you know, I had no idea anything about politics. But I'm sitting there, I'm saying, oh, well, I'll help you. [0:16:00] I hear not really knowing what I was saying at all. So anyway, eventually, he became county chairman. And I became secretary for a while, and then I was the vice chairman. And I mean, you know, basically, I didn't do much, except that I was around. And then one time, we had a very successful phone campaign for a state candidate. I think it might have been Luger. I'm not sure. There was a state representative

who the county chairman learned that was not going to run again. And so, he came to me, as I say, it was my friend, said, "Well, why don't you run? He's gonna announce that he's not gonna run. [0:17:00] And, but it's gonna be two days." And the filing time was almost up to go file to run. And he said, "Why don't you run?" And so, you know, I didn't know what I was saying. So, I say well alright. So, I had to go to Indianapolis, and file to run for this office here. And I did, but an opponent got in also, before the filing deadline. So even though he thought he was setting it up for me, it didn't work that way. So, I was opposed in the primary for the district seat here. So, we had a good old race. And I was basically an unknown, [0:18:00] except I was known around the community, I certainly wasn't known as, you know, a political being. But I had good name recognition. And I won. Fair and square. So then, you know, here I am running for this office. Little do I know what I'm doing. And I won.

BB: Wow. Okay. And so, did you have, like, a political outlook that you developed while you're running for this seat?

JH: Only the local issues, you know, mostly it was things like serve the constituency, and listen to them and bring them information. And, you know, I didn't have a platform per se. [0:19:00] So, I didn't have any particular issues I was going to deal with. I was gonna be responsive.

BB: Sure. Did you have like any political people that you looked up to, like national or state or local? Or was it just...

JH: Not really, I like I said I was the most unlikely person, that I just happen to be in the right place at the right time. That's what I keep saying and you know it all worked.

BB: Yeah. That's really interesting. I mean, so did you even have to...did you run some type of campaign that, you know, emphasize those local issues? Or?

JH: Yes, I did. I, you know, I had ads and I had, I mean, we don't have TV while we have TV, but I don't have TV ads. [0:20:00] Radio and newspaper. At that time, that was about all there was while I was TV for the cities, but you know, no local TV. And so, I did all those things. I had coffees, I had some fundraisers. And, you know, it's mostly just the platform would have been, as I say, listen to you and represent you well. That kind of thing generalized.

BB: Do you remember the name of your main opponent?

JH: Basically, the same thing.

BB: Okay. And what was your opponent's name?

JH: Ray Valenski.

BB: So, how did you feel when you were officially elected?

JH: [0:21:00] Well, I was grateful. But little did I know what I was getting myself into. I remember going to the statehouse the first day. And yes, I'd been there. But only to take kids to page or something like that. And, you know, I've never been there in the lobby people or whatever. And I go the first day, and I wonder what in the world have I gotten myself into?

BB: That's funny. Oh, my gosh. Did your feelings about getting elected change each time you got elected again?

JH: Well, I mean I felt a little more secure in my job. And I certainly understood what I was supposed to be doing much better. [0:22:00] And so, I also have the feeling about the job that you never know, what's going on behind your back. And I mean, even if you have your legislation stacked perfectly, and you know, supposedly, what you're doing. You never know, when somebody goes into the Speaker's office and takes care of it another way. So, you know, even though it's supposed to be a very open process. And of course, still today, they complain that they do too much behind closed doors. And that really is true to a certain extent yes.

BB: Right. Yeah, I can see that, I'm sure. Yeah. All sorts of stuff that goes on. [0:23:00] That doesn't have to be public record, and that people are having conversations and making deals. So yeah. Did your campaign strategies change over your political career?

JH: Not really. I can't remember for sure, but I my guess is no, not really. Because usually, the legislation...well, if local people asked me to carry something, I obviously did. And so, I would, so it boils down to, again, my local district, and what they are interested in what they want, [0:24:00] and try to accomplish the goals if they're at all possible. So, you know, there were things that lobbyists type people, like one time, we have a city utility electric company, and the director of the electric company wanted me to carry a bill, wanted me to enter a bill to provide for hydroelectric power down on Brookville Lake, which isn't our county at all. And that ended up being I mean, which I did introduce it. And I, I mean, I had a bill for that. And it was voted on [0:25:00] but I think that uh, the House Republicans obviously passed it in the House as a favor to me. Not because it was good legislation. (Laughs) Because it wasn't. It was ridiculous. So, it never came to light, you know, never saw the light of day. But that's what I sort of got. One time, we had a really a local hearing in Franklin County, which is not our county at all. And everybody came and really let me know what they thought. It was very contentious.

BB: So, a constituent asked you to sponsor this then?

JH: Yes.

BB: Okay. And you just decided to do it just as a favor, even though you didn't think it would work, [0:26:00] I guess?

JH: Right. Well, I didn't. I wasn't sure. But I didn't think it was very good policy. But yes, I did carry it.

BB: Now, when you were, I guess first starting out in the Indiana General Assembly, how did you learn the process and the ins and outs of it?

JH: Well, they had limited training sessions. But mostly and hit and miss. And we had I mean, you know, I was first elected with some others. And they all felt the same way. I mean, you go by doing. (Laughs) And I don't know. There were a couple of people who I could talk to. [0:27:00] But you never really knew who your friends were. In the in the system. So anyway, I had a couple that I could talk to. And, you know, we talked things over. But it was very informal.

BB: Sure. Did you have any political mentors?

JH: Not really.

BB: And how did you keep track of what your constituents wanted to? Do you just meet with them often and make sure you're always reachable or?

JH: Well, I made sure they can reach me either at home or in the legislature. And I would have meetings periodic, when we were in session each year, [0:28:00] they were more informal, but I would get together with them. Or Saturday morning.

BB: What was the first bill you sponsored?

JH: Oh, I don't know.

BB: Always interested to ask. Because some people have a memory of it. Others don't.

JH: Okay, well I don't know. Now, I do know that because I was political being in the first place in the local. I eventually was Chairman of Elections and Apportionment. And I always got stuck with election bills. And that's no fun because that is truly the most political of the world.

BB: Yeah. Sure, yeah. I'm sure that's complicated. What was the regular [0:29:00] interactions like among members of the General Assembly, formal and informal?

JH: I guess you would say formally they're very formal. And, you know, if you were a novice, you obviously understood the pecking order very well. And really tended to cling together I mean, you know, for dinner and such, social gatherings. I don't know. There are lots of lobbyists around all the time who are wanting [0:30:00] this or wanting that.

BB: Okay. Did you find the lobbyists useful or?

JH: Semi.

BB: Okay, sometimes maybe they were a nuisance or?

JH: Yes, sometimes they were a real nuisance.

BB: What were the interactions like between Democrats and Republicans?

JH: Well, just like any other organization. Some Democrats and Republicans were very cordial. A few were not. I mean, you always had your kind of your hit pocket list of, well, don't mess with that one. You disagreed strongly with them.

BB: Yeah, I guess that makes sense. You'd kind of start to figure out who you could work with and who you couldn't I guess.

JH: Exactly. And that's true, even if you're a Republican. [0:31:00]

BB: Well, yeah, that's right. You can have a wide variety of people in a party. So yeah. Yeah. Makes sense. What were the big differences between the House and Senate in terms of like behavior, or how things worked?

JH: Well, the joke was always the Senate is the House of the winds. Talk about everything, and we are the ones who get things done. Now, that wasn't totally true. And I'm sure they called us something worse probably.

BB: A little rivalry, I guess. Yeah.

JH: Yes, exactly. But I did have some difficulty working with a senator from here early on. And then he was defeated. And so, you know, that was much better.

BB: [0:32:00] What did you think about the process of generating a bill? Did you feel like it was a good process? And usually successful at creating effective legislation or getting rid of bad legislation? Or were there any flaws?

JH: I don't know how to answer that. Obviously. You have as a legislator, an idea. And you take it to the Legislative Council, who puts your idea into words and writes the bill. I mean, with your input. I mean, it can be a way out, whatever. But they will write it in legalese. To be presented. And of course, you're responsible for presenting it [0:33:00] and taking on amendments and what have you. So, I think it was a reasonable process. I mean, there's no way anyone individual could write their own bills. You know, technically. So, I think it's a good process of any now some people say, well, they write, you know, the legislative services writes whatever they want. Well, I don't know.

BB: Yeah, well I imagine you can also read those bills before your you show them off. So, if you want something changed, I guess you go back to legislative services.

JH: Well, yes. Oh, yeah. They'll fix anything before. But once they're introduced, then of course it has to be changed by amendment. Anyway, I think it's a reasonable process.

BB: Okay. Did you feel like [0:34:00] you had a decent sense of how people would vote before actually voting? I know, you mentioned that sometimes, things were going on behind the scenes that were hard to keep track of, but.

JH: In most cases, yes, you do. Now on something controversial, where, you know, the speaker may have had a view or somebody else had a view. I've been around when they kept the voting machines open for quite a while till various people were located or voted one way or another. But that's another, you know, tactic, I guess.

BB: So, would you say that party leadership was pretty influential in terms of determining like, you know what the bills would get through or?

JH: Well, I think, [0:35:00] yes. Certainly, the speaker has great power. And the chairman of the committee's has some power. Well, for the initial stages,

BB: Yeah. Did you disagree with party leadership much or at all? Or?

JH: I can't recall that. No, I probably didn't.

BB: How often would you say you worked with the other party to get legislation done?

JH: Not very often, because most of the things that I...weren't party controversial, most of the things I carried were [0:36:00] not party controversial.

BB: Okay, so I guess you're saying is that they weren't really things that you needed to have to try to work with the other party for? Because for the most part, everyone kind of agreed on them, or?

JH: Yes.

BB: They weren't very political, I guess.

JH: Right.

BB: Now, what would you say the public does not know about the Indiana General Assembly and how it operates?

JH: Well, I guess the public doesn't know how right now, [0:37:00] how little influence the public has sometimes, even though you know, the processes, call your legislator, ask them to vote this way, vote that way, whatever. I don't think. Well, and then legislators all have their individual polls prepared by their staff people. Of what the issues are, and I know a lot of people who fill them out religiously. [0:38:00] And I fill them out, because I think that some staffer tabulates them. Yes, you see the overall result. But it's almost like so what. So, that's...I don't know how you can put those into words. I don't.

BB: So I guess it's, I mean, it kind of just sounds like people aren't really interested necessarily in lots of things that happen the General Assembly, so members don't necessarily need to pay much attention to what people think unless it's like a specific local issue or something?

JH: Well, not exactly. [0:39:00] I can't think of something now. But well, should we raise taxes or not raise taxes to fund whatever. And that's already...there are strong views on that. But, you know, by the time it gets to the legislature, it's kind of cut and dried. It may be a party division, in terms of whether you should or shouldn't, but if not a constituent by district consideration, particularly.

BB: Well, I guess those are also things that, you know, the general public would be so far removed from all the factors at play there that they, it'd be hard for them to, I guess weigh in too much besides sort of kind of overgeneralizing the bills, especially when it comes to like taxes and stuff and what it does, [0:40:00] and they probably rely more on what their elected officials says, and I suppose have their own opinion about because they wouldn't know as much as their elected official, I suppose.

JH: Well, but they do have strong views about it, but the same time. It's pretty hard to influence the overall trend.

BB: So what would you say, from your experience was the most influential factor in the minds of members of the General Assembly? Was it sort of, like lobbyists? Or just the general party

leadership line or what? What made people? What had the most influence on a person's decision making?

JH: Well, I think lobbyists have their place. Because they have a lot more detailed information than [0:41:00] an individual legislator can possibly gather in the period of time, so they have their place. But at the same time, I don't want them to...I did not want them to have too much power. Because, you know, it's my job, or was my job to vote for the best interests of the constituency. Now, party has a lot to do with it. On the big button, you know, money and what have you. It's usually divided by Republican and Democrat. So, in those cases [0:42:00] I don't know I'm not very...well, I usually went along with whatever the caucus was. In most cases.

BB: How did your legislative service affect your family life?

JH: Well, I didn't think it affected it, but I was divorced during the period. (Laughs)

BB: Okay, yeah, I guess it wouldn't affected much then. (Laughs) Okay. Do you remember what the most controversial legislative issue was during your time in the General Assembly?

JH: I don't know. At one point in time when Otis Bowen was governor. It was over money. And skip that. I'm blank.

BB: Okay. That's fine. What piece of legislation that you worked on [0:43:00] took the most of your time?

JH: Well, probably this hydroelectric thing.

BB: Do you have a proudest moment as a legislator?

JH: No, I don't think so.

BB: Okay. What about was there a big hurdle that you had to overcome at some point during your time in office?

JH: I don't know that you'd call it a big hurdle. But the division between male and female was pretty obvious.

BB: Yeah, that's, I mean, that's an interesting thing. Especially because when I was looking up some information and doing some research before this interview, it appeared that you were one of the first women in the General Assembly. What was that like?

JH: Well, I really wasn't one of the first women there were others. [0:44:00] But I was in the minority for sure. And there's never been a woman from this district. Theoretically, I was the first woman from this part of the state. And I mean, it's sort of a little lonely sometimes.

BB: Yeah, I bet.

JH: And that's why I say women legislators, sort of clung together. And they have your own party.

BB: Yeah, yeah. Okay. And which were there, in your time were there women legislators from both parties?

JH: Yes.

BB: Okay. And did you all feel [0:45:00] like connected with each other even if you're from a different party?

JH: Well only connected that it was certainly male dominated. I think we all felt that.

BB: Do you think that's gotten better over time?

JH: I have no idea.

BB: Fair enough. Now, in your opinion, what is the most important work of the Indiana General Assembly?

JH: I guess it is to update laws for the state and for the people.

BB: Okay. [0:46:00] Yeah, that makes sense. Now, when I was doing research for this interview, I saw that there was kind of an interesting incident on one year that you're up for reelection, I think around like 1985 or something, where there is a dispute about who had won the election. And something happened where it appeared that you were announced the winner of the election, and then they changed it and said that you lost and then they changed it again and said that you do you remember something like that?

JH: Of course, I was only a two termer. I mean a two-year term. So, in 84', I've always said, I ought to be in the book of guinness, because for having more recounts, than anyone in the world, cause 84', I mean, I won. But I had recounts. [0:47:00] And, but I won that one. In 86' I lost that one. But the problem was that the House came over and recounted my...the legislative services came over I think, and they counted. And the local people recounted, I mean, everybody in the countryside recounted. And really, I lost that one. And it was very close both times. I can't remember how many votes but three or four you know. And so, I'm also the queen of the hanging chads. You've certainly heard about the Florida election with the punch card voting. [0:48:00] Well, yeah, I had punch card voting so in my races hanging chads were an issue. (Laughs) So the recounts involved did the punch go through or didn't go through.

BB: So, what's it like to have to go through all those so many recounts throughout your career?

JH: It's not good.

BB: Yeah, I'm sure that's a really stressful process.

JH: It's really nerve wracking.

BB: Yeah, I was gonna say yeah, so I guess since then any election that you hear about that has like some type of controversy with recounts, I'm sure that you probably think about your experiences a bit.

JH: Yes, yes, I do. And you know, I had local recount people, so I'd remember some of the [0:49:00] friends that were on the very first one. I remember sitting in this in my house here and you know, talking to him about recounting what they do.

BB: Yeah. Oh my gosh, that's funny. Wow. Okay. So, when did you leave the Indiana General Assembly?

JH: Well in 1986 the last one that I lost.

BB: So, you didn't want to make the comebacks or anything you just retired at that point?

JH: Yes, no way I was ever gonna run again.

BB: You didn't want to see any more recounts I guess then.

JH: No, no.

BB: Did you ever after leaving the Indiana General Assembly just ever think about going back into the sciences at all and following what your degree was in originally or?

JH: No, I didn't. (Laughs). [0:50:00] I did a little bit of limited lab work one time but that was a pretty short term.

BB: So how would you summarize your time as a legislator overall?

JH: Well, Governor Otis Bowen once said it was worth a whole college degree. And or, anyway, I certainly was worth 10 years of study. Where I learned a lot. About well about politics, people. The legislative process. And so, I'm much wiser, I think, then I was [0:51:00] originally.

BB: Do you have a favorite story or anecdote from your time as a legislator?

JH: No, I don't

BB: Okay. What lessons, if any, did you learn?

JH: Watch your back. (Both Laugh)

BB: Did you have any regrets as a legislator?

JH: I can't think of any. I mean, I may have regretted that I part of the time that I ever ran.

BB: What advice would you give to future legislators [0:52:00] or even current legislators?

JH: Well, you can accomplish it all. And so, I mean, I guess be as diligent as you can be, and work with the others the best you can.

BB: Yeah, that's good advice. So last few questions here. How has the state of Indiana changed over the course of your lifetime?

JH: How has what changed?

BB: The State of Indiana.

JH: Oh the State of Indiana. I don't know whether I can answer that. It's still a Midwestern. I guess Indiana is still considered... [0:53:00] I don't believe it's like a country bumpkin place, but a lot of people believe that. I think that it's certainly, it's an average Midwestern state. I think we've progressed in some ways, as have other states.

BB: How about the Indiana General Assembly how is that changed?

JH: Well, it still has to finish its sessions in the specified time, of course, they can always stop the clock, which has been done before. And I don't know, I think it's probably pretty much the same.

BB: Okay. What about politics in the state? Do you think politics has changed much? [0:54:00]

JH: I think for the most part, it's become more impersonal.

BB: Okay. That's interesting. Why?

JH: Well, just because we have so much more technology. And what I mean, is the, you know, it's just easier to use the technologies than to go visit or to participate in a way.

BB: Yeah, sure. Do you think there's more tension in politics today than there was when you were serving?

JH: It's probably about the same.

BB: Okay. So, you don't get the impression that things are like more politically divided today [0:55:00] than they were when you were serving at all?

JH: No, I don't.

BB: What if any enduring qualities do Hoosiers still have or hold dear?

JH: I don't know.

BB: I guess you kind of said things haven't changed too much in Indiana in terms of that. So, I guess Hoosiers are kind of the same to a certain extent. What do you want Hoosiers to know about their role in relation to the function of the Indiana General Assembly?

JH: Well, I would like to think that they still can contact their legislator and be heard. [0:56:00] And that the grassroots can understand what's going on. Now, that doesn't mean that it's all gonna come as they wish. But that it is a melting pot. And it does still function in a good way, in spite of the fact that you know, it may be messy. You've heard the old one. Like, watching the sausage being made.

BB: Yeah, okay. But generally speaking, they still have a role to play. And I guess they can influence things a bit.

JH: Yes, exactly.

BB: Well, is there anything that I didn't ask about that you want to talk about at all or? [0:57:00]

JH: Only that I guess committee chairmanship. In the I don't know, early on. I was Chairman of the Roads and Transportation Committee. Because I had been involved in and I knew the Governor and the Speaker of the House. And so, I think, and I forget whether it was probably the second session. I don't remember for sure. But early on, I was appointed to Roads and Transportation Chairman, because I had kind of an in and I think they appointed me that as a courtesy to be a chairmanship. And then after that, I always got stuck with election legislation. [0:58:00] So that was that was a bear.

BB: Sure. Okay. Yeah, I bet. Yeah, I imagined that would have been tough to deal with. Now, were you serving on sort of the election committee while going in dealing with some of these recounts and stuff?

JH: I don't think so. I'd have to look that up.

BB: Yeah, I just thought it would be interesting, because it seemed like you can't get away from election stuff. (Both laugh)

JH: I felt that way anyway.

BB: Yeah, I bet. Yeah. Just constantly lurking. [0:59:00] Well, anything else comes to mind, or is that pretty much it?

JH: Well, I think that's pretty much it.

BB: Well, thank you so much for taking part and doing this. I think it'd be a cool thing to have in our collection to have your interview and all the experiences that you had. So, thanks again.

JH: Thank you very much.

BB: No problem. All right. Talk to you later.

JH: Bye.

BB: Bye.