

TRANSCRIPT for PODCASTS

GOVERNOR JIM GERINGER

Interviewed by Mark Junge

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For the Wyoming State Archives

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PODCAST 1

JUNGE: Today is the 22nd of June. It's Monday morning. My name is Mark Junge and I'm here with former Governor Jim Geringer in his home at ...what's the address?

GERINGER: 1507 Road 215. Cheyenne. Just off of Horsecreek Road. Northwest of Cheyenne.

JUNGE: Ok, this is a beautiful mansion. I think I'd call it a mansion.

GERINGER: It's just a home to us.

JUNGE: Well, it's gorgeous! It's probably not what you got used to growing up in right?

GERINGER: No, we had a fairly modest home when I was growing up. I was the second oldest of seven siblings. As you can imagine with one bathroom what that would be like. I think at one time...let's see..I've got to calculate..at one time, there were six teenagers in the house.

JUNGE: How many girls?

GERINGER: I had four sisters and two brothers.

JUNGE: This is all preliminary but the purpose of this interview is to obtain information personally from Jim that will be used by people, by posterity, by people that are interested in his background and career and this interview was authorized and paid for the Wyoming Humanities Council in a grant. And Sue Castaneda who works as an information officer for State Government at Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources, this was her idea and she's the one who asked me if I would interview you. I've done this in the past and....

GERINGER: Yes, Sue called me and in fact, Linda Fabian sent me an email and said "Now, you'll do a good job." She made reference to both you and Sue – I guess you know Linda. She was my executive assistant for a time.

JUNGE: Yes, I do. I've worked with Linda for years.

JUNGE: To start off with, can I get some vital statistics like your full name, birth date and birthplace?

GERINGER: Sure. My name is James Edward Geringer. Born April 24th, 1944 in a home in Wheatland, Wyoming. I was not born in a hospital. It was just a.. I guess you'd call a home for birthing. The interesting quirk...even though my mother had given birth moving buying that very house and that's where we lived...just rather a coincidence. As I mentioned, I was the second oldest of seven siblings. My background is farming. My parents owned a farm.

JUNGE: Can you give me, off the top of your head, the names and ages of your siblings?

GERINGER: Well, I should be able to. My oldest sister is deceased. Her name was Betty Jean. My next younger brother, Ronald -- he's also deceased. Let's see -- Betty would be 66 right now. My next younger brother Ron would be 64. I get the ages a little bit confused. Then I have a sister Marilyn Ann. Oh, let's see, she is exactly three years younger than I because she was born on my birthday when I was three years old so she is 62. Rick. My brother Rick is just 60. We just embarrassed him on his 60th birthday. Richard Allen is his name. Sister Judith Lynn. She's one of the four regional public health nurses for the State of Wyoming. Her married name is Stallman. My sister Marilyn, her married name is Le Doux.

JUNGE: Any relation to the Le Douxs up in Kaycee?

GERINGER: No, actually, they're from New England. In fact that's where Marilyn and Dick and family live is in Nashua, New Hampshire. Rick lives in Wheatland, Marilyn in New Hampshire, sister Judy lives in Sheridan and Jo Ann Marie -- married name Pease, she lives up in Rapid City.

JUNGE: Do you see each other very much?

GERINGER: Quite often. Yeah, the family is quite close. In fact, I just sent an email about a cousin of ours who just past away so we could -- as many as possible go to his funeral down in Colorado.

JUNGE: Who were your parents and if you can remember, what were their birth dates?

GERINGER: My dad, Gottlieb Geringer, he was born August 26th, 1905 in Lauwe, Russia near the Bulgar River. LAUWE -- that's the German name and we had the good fortune to visit back there during my second year as governor quite by coincidence again. The Russian name for the town now is Yablonovka which means "apple blossom". Mom -- her name was Edla Malin and she was born..well here maiden name was Johnson. A lot of the Swedes moved over into Eastern Wyoming, Western Nebraska. So she's Swedish. Her birthday was February 25th, 1913.

JUNGE: They're both deceased?

GERINGER: They're both deceased.

JUNGE: Did they come from large families as well?

GERINGER: Mom's family -- let's see, there were four girls and a boy, so five all together. Dad's family -- part of the history is in this summary -- he had two older siblings who were deceased in

Russia. One from a sledding accident –he developed gangrene and passed away -- he was about eleven years old, he was dad’s oldest brother. And then a sister who died in infancy, apparently from whooping cough. And then there were nine others. The total in the family including dad was eleven. Let’s see. There were three children when the family started immigrating to America. They started out with my grandfather and grandmother, my Aunt Mary and older sister of dad’s--an older aunt, and Dad. And Dad was just a child at the time. And then they got to New York. Grandfather Geringer was turned back because of eye trouble and then he had to come again later through Galveston. And so my grandmother with two infants in tow -- not infants - I mean children and pregnant with my Uncle Henry made her way through Ellis Island across to Chicago and down to Sugar City, Colorado -- or Rocky Ford. Their passage had been paid people who wanted to bring in beet laborers. There’s quite a history of the Volga Germans in Russia and how they’d been attracted to come into Russia by Catherine the Great in the late 1700’s. I think in part to develop a good solid agricultural economy – they were given full autonomy -- the Germans were. She apparently just invited the French and the Germans were but they had just finished the seven-year war so but they didn’t want much to do with each other. So we can trace – I have a family tree that goes all the way back to 1760 on my dad’s side. And that’s another amazing story in itself -- how we came about that.

JUNGE: Do you want to go over just a couple of highlights about that?

GERINGER: The highlights. When I was running for governor the first time in 1994, I received a call from a woman who identified herself as Bernice Geringer Madden who lived in California.. She had a daughter going to the University of Wyoming. She was driving across Wyoming to visit her and saw one of my billboards - “Geringer for Governor” and she thought “Hmm...I wonder if we’re related.” And she called and said “Do you have family that came from the Bulgar region of Russia?” I said, “My father.” She said, “You mean your grandfather?” I said, “No, my father.” She said, “Oh, I somehow assumed you were much younger than that.” I’m not sure what she was implying.....As it turned out, she happened to have a plot of the town where Dad was born that included the family residence and she also, over the years, put together a complete family genealogy all the way back to the first person who came from Germany and settled in Russia and then the lineage from both my grandmother and my grandfather how they came down through the family tree and finally ended up here.

JUNGE: Did you dad say why particularly they went up in Russia? I know Catherine invited them because she wanted to bolster the economy but...

GERINGER: Mostly the economy and also to develop a buffer between the Nordic invading hordes from the south. They figured ‘let the Germans die instead of the Russians.’ There’s a whole history written about that too.

JUNGE: Did he ever tell you much about his dad or how he was raised?

GERINGER: I knew my great-grandfather Geringer – they were all raised to be very industrious -- a deep-seated faith. They grew up with both morning and evening devotions. The kids all took confirmation. All of the classes were in German, even after they got to America. In fact when I took German in college, the formal German, my just shook his head and said, “I don’t speak that”

and he wouldn't. But I would write some letters back from college and include a paragraph or two in German and dad would say, "I can't read that." So mom would read it to him kind of deciphering in her Swedish ways. Dad kind of got a kick out of it. He always looked forward to the letters. Dad never opened up a whole lot. He was a quiet person. After his dad passed away in 1935 from a heart attack – I guess he was in his '50's. Dad inherited the farm as the oldest son and found out that there was quite a debt owed on the farm – a debt that was held incidentally by a state legislator named Manning. A strange quirk I guess that somehow or another there's a legislative history in my background even though my parents were not at all political

JUNGE: Are you talking about Russia?

GERINGER: No, I'm talking about when they first moved to Wheatland. I guess I should backtrack a little bit. Dad came from Russia in 1907. They settled and worked first in Sugar City, Colorado basically as indentured servants. Grandma delivered my Uncle Henry in March, I believe it was. That first spring they worked 13 different farms thinning beets and weeding them. Dad could still remember, at age 3, cause sugar beets -- the beet comes in a cluster of seeds. Under today's technology the seeds are all separated, so there are individual seeds -- even seed-coated to stimulate individual growth. Back then, the clusters were planted because they couldn't be separated and then it was up to the thinners to go through and pull out everything except the healthiest beet so it was backbreaking work. So, they worked 13 farms that first spring – dad crawling on his hands and knees because little fingers could pull beets better than big fingers. My Uncle Henry – my grandmother would put him in a washtub and put a gunnysack over him. She'd make a round up in back and then she'd nurse him and go back again. The stories they tell—it was a hard life.

JUGNE: Did your dad ever say that the reason that when they came over in 1907 when your dad was two was because of their wanting to improve themselves economically or was it for religious reasons?

GERINGER: I think they wanted to own their own land free of government intervention – that's probably paraphrasing him a little bit but. The autonomy that the Germans had had in Russia...they prospered well and then when the Bolsheviks started to become active, especially World War II...or World War I ...The Bolsheviks were coming into power, the czars were being deposed or killed – typically killed – there was a lot of pressure upon the Germans to be conscripted into the Bolshevik army. They didn't own their land – all land was held in common under Catherine the Great but they had total autonomy and they were never to be conscripted into the Russian army. So, they had independence -- I guess independence is -- so that's why autonomy fits better—your own government, your own faith. They were not persecuted per say...but as it turned out they were later because the Bolsheviks became the communists that were anti-religion. So dad didn't talk much about any anti-religious things but I think that was inherent in part of the reason the family came over. So the early ones who came over – some settled in Oklahoma, some in California...dad's immediate family mostly in Colorado.

JUNGE: Did he say why Colorado? I mean some of the Volga Russians...I did a little review for this before we started this morning and some of the Volga Russians...oh excuse, me the Volga Germans or the German Russians, whatever you want to call them, went to South America because

Catholicism was the prevailing religion in places like Brazil and Argentina and Paraguay so the Lutherans or the Protestants let's say, came over to this country. I assume that some word must have spread and your dad caught wind of it that they were welcome out on the great plains....I don't know.

GERINGER: That's basically...that's an assumption on my part. I never really heard why the families went where they went. There were Germans that went up to Minnesota --we did have a contact from a Geringer family member in Oklahoma at one time but we lost track of them. And there was another family member in Fresno, California -- we made brief contact and then we lost contact with them but this Bernice Geringer who traced the family history-- she was from that same area in San Joaquin Valley. But they came here to enjoy a good farming life. Farming was what they knew. In fact, German Russians developed a variety of hard-bred winter wheat that became a staple of the great plains and also the sugar beets..they brought the sugar beets with them. So they brought a lot of industrious hard work and that's why they usually raised large families. It was easier to control the labor, I guess. Cheaper to feed.

JUNGE: No such thing as unionization!

GERINGER: Dad told me the story one time -- he graduated from the eighth grade and his dad told him "that's eight more years than I had --you go to work!" And that's what dad did. I was first-generation college. No one on either side of my family had ever gone to college in the extended family so that was quite an occasion I guess for me to go off to college?

JUNGE: He didn't encourage you to go to college?

GERINGER: Yes, he did. What I was getting at was in the whole family history was that you worked hard to make a living. In a way they felt they were not entitled to go to college -- they didn't even think or aspire to go to college because when you made it through high school that was more than any of the previous generation had ever hoped to achieve. You made your own way at that point. My Aunt Elsie on mom's sat. When she turned 18 and graduated from high school, she was immediately hired to be a schoolteacher. That was fairly common back in...let's see ..that was probably in the late '20's, early '30's.

JUNGE: That was your dad's sister?

GERINGER: No, my mother's sister.

JUNGE: Well, not all of the teachers who came to teach went to what they call "normal school." She didn't go to normal school; she just graduated from high school? Boy, that's fascinating history about your dad. What type of person was he?

GERINGER: Well, he was about my build. Tall and thin. He was an innovator as I recall, what little he talked about it. He had the first threshing machine in the Wheatland flats. Did custom threshing to help pay off the farm debt. He never talked any about politics but Mom sort of let on one day that the way she and my dad met was that they were hoping that my dad would be attracted to her younger sister and so they all went to a Republican rally -- you know a free meal and that

attracted people and dad and mom were attracted and they were married. Dad when he was 36 and Mom when she was 29...maybe he was 37..so they raised seven kids even after marrying quite late.

JUNGE: This was not the plan though. He was to marry her sister?

GERINGER: That's what some of them told me. I can't vouch for that but that's what I heard.

JUNGE: Coming from such a hard background, I mean, not necessarily a privation, although I suppose there was some of that – but a hardwork background, was your dad severe, was he tough.

GERINGER: He had set real high expectations. Compliments were feel and far between but you always felt like you earned them and we didn't take anything for granted. He instilled a work ethic that was not based on intimidation or fear – it was you do the right thing. If you see a job that needs to be done, do it. Don't wait to see whose job it is. If you can do it, do it. We passed that on to our kids, I guess you do it by example. I don't know how you teach that except by example.

JUNGE: We didn't mention though how they go to Wheatland necessarily..they were down in Colorado in Sugar City, Rocky Ford.

GERINGER: Right. They worked until they had paid off their passage. I think it probably took them about six or seven to work off the passage over so they lived first in Rocky Ford and then in Sugar City just working for over and then somehow ended up around Platteville/Fort Lupton, Colorado area. Quite a few more German Russians had settled up there. In fact, my Uncle Dave Martin from Greeley had settle up there. I'll see if I can get his tape. He's the one that when he was still in Russia used to trade horses and camels in Russia and Kazakhstan. Never got to hear much of that story...he should have been the politician—he's quite the storyteller. We'll let that phone call go. It's probably a telemarketer. Yeah, it's on the house phone so I'm sure it is.

JUNGE: So Dave was quite a story teller?

GERINGER: Yeah, he was the premiere farmer on both sides of the family. All of his crops were always in on time, never a weed in the field, the buildings were all painted, the grass was all cut. We never figured out how Uncle Dave got all that done, but he did. He'd come up to visit Mom and Dad and he'd kind of look over the fields and make suggestions about what Dad should have been doing...

Phone interrupts...

Well back to the story about Dad moving up from Colorado. I believe they went from Rocky Ford to Sugar City and then up to Platteville. They finally had the means to rent some land and I guess it was still a pretty hard life. They didn't have all the equipment but they had some, and they had a big family of course and the kids were all pressed into service. They raised some -- I guess you'd call it truck farming in addition to the standard farming they did because dad tells the story of the Kuner-Empson, the packing plant down there that packaged a lot of vegetables. To help make ends meet, my grandmother also worked part-time at the Kuner-Empson plant. It's all Kuner's now but

dad always called it “Kuner-Empson!” He said they’d haul the tomatoes in and the good tomatoes in, they’d sell and the bad tomatoes that were rotten, they’d throw into a bucket and make ketchup out of!

JUNGE: You don’t let things go to waste!

GERINGER: No! That’s an ethic that now a new generation with some of the difficult economic times might learn that instead of just being a total consumption society that when you tire of something you throw it away. The generation that preceded mine were so frugal out of necessity that they followed Ben Franklin’s adage-- use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without!

JUNGE: A lot of what you say has a sympathetic resonance in me because I was raised by German Lutherans and my background is strict Missouri Synod Lutheran. What is your synod, by the way?

GERINGER: Grew up and confirmed in Missouri Synod. I currently go to Ascension here in town. That’s ELCA. Dad’s family...they called it German Evangelical Lutheran...reformed. I can’t remember how it all fit together. Let me trace a little more of history and then get mom’s in here too. Grandpa Geringer, when they were in Platteville...

JUNGE: This is on your dad’s side?

GERINGER: On dad’s side, yeah. His name was Gottlieb also. Dad had no middle name and all of his brothers –their middle name was Johann because grandpa...his middle name was Johann. So dad was just Gottlieb Geringer. No middle name. All the other like my Uncle Henry was Heinrich Johann, and Albert, I guess his given name was Adolph but Albert Johann and Jacob Johann... Grandpa Geringer heard that there was good farmland up in Canada. And of course all travel back then, except by horse, was by train so he hopped the train in Platteville and came up. And, of course the train has to stop and take on water and coal along the way. They stopped in Wheatland. I’ve heard different stories about the stop at Wheatland. This was going to be an intermediate stop to go on up ...I’ve heard at times Canada and at other Montana. In Hardin, Montana, I know there were some people that settled up there but I know there were also some that went up in Canada. I’m just speculating – it was probably more like Canada but I don’t know. I can’t verify it. So, they stopped in Wheatland, and he heard about the Wheatland irrigation district -- it had developed something of a reputation –it had been developed about ten or fifteen years prior to that ---all with private funds. I think it’s the largest privately developed irrigation district in the west. Almost all the others were under the Bureau of Reclamation. So one story is that Grandpa Geringer went to the nearby hotel which is just a block away from the train station.

JUNGE: Is that the Globe? The old Globe Hotel?

GERINGER: Probably the old Globe, yeah. ...and had a drink of water and missed the train. And thought he’d look around a little bit and contacted a real estate agent. The other story was that while he was there, he was attracted to the community and contacted a real estate agent...so the end story was consistent that he contacted a realtor or whatever they were at the time. The guy showed him around and he found a quarter-section of land...might have been a little more than that and they settled on a price of \$90 an acre. Back then, your credit history was pretty much

dependent on your word. You gave your word and you lived up to it. That was another deep-seated value that the people all had back then. If you gave your word, whether you signed a contract or not... you lived up to your word...you didn't try to get out of it. Went back to Colorado and made arrangements to move up to Wheatland. They did that over a couple of years...1927 and 1928. So that's how they made it from Colorado up to Wyoming. All the boys, all except Aunt Katybut all the boys came up there in dad's family. Albert finally moved to Colorado to get work. He was the youngest. The youngest in any family usually back in the farming days...the older boys somehow would find some land or get started on their own --the oldest usually ended up with the inheritance.

JUNGE: Prima geniture, I think they called it. So the youngest son would usually do what? He'd take off and do something different?

GERINGER: In this case he did. He became a shoe repairman. He opened up a shoe store and he sold new shoes but he made his money on shoe repair.

JUNGE: He was a cobbler then?

GERINGER: Cobbler. Hmm hmm.

JUNGER: So your dad settled there in '28?

GERINGER: '28. Yeah. They brought some of the stuff by horse and wagon. Grandpa Geringer had a car – and so he would go off ahead it took him two weeks to go about 160 miles maybe. We can't fathom what it took to go when you can only go like 10, 15 miles a day because of people walking and the livestock pulling things. So, Grandpa would go ahead and find a camp spot where there would be water and grass. He was kind of the advanced scout and they made their way up to Wheatland and opened for business up there.

JUNGE: They didn't have that much money though. We're talking \$1,500 for 160 acres approximately. So, like you say, your word was your bond. Did they have the money to pay it off? How did they manage to pay off \$1,500 bucks in those days?

GERINGER: I guess early on it wasn't too bad, but then we had that terrible drought in the '30's. There were years when they just had a pitiful crop and so the guy that Grandpa bought the farm would carry each payment as a separate note so he kept carrying more and more money that was due on the place so I think they ended up when he passed away in 1935 with more owed on it that was originally paid for. So he owed \$100 an acre. I can remember when land in the '50s' when land only brought \$100 an acre. So, I have no perspective... I know that things were a lot cheaper back in the '30's but the land wasn't.

JUNGE: Your grandfather died in 1935 during the middle of the depression, which must have been really tough for the family.

GERINGER: Yep. Dad was just going to get rid of the farm but Grandma said, "Nope, we gave our word and we're going to pay it off." So, he put his mind to work and went after it and six years

later he met mom and married her. So that when that group of Germans eventually...there were several German families that moved up to Wheatland....the Brunners, the Wilhelms and the oh, I can't remember all of the German families that came to Wheatland, Torrington, Scottsbluff, Morrill...there were quite a few of them along the Laramie and Platte Rivers. They decided they needed a Lutheran Church so they built the church in Wheatland. Bethlehem Lutheran ...and it stood for years but then the school district bought it and tore it down because it was adjacent to some of their property. Dad tells the story about being a young lad who had to help usher sometimes. Back then, most offerings were coin. They didn't have much folding money. That was a pretty hefty offering if you put folding money in. Every now and then, someone would trip and the offering would spill and they only had one big furnace grate for the whole church and it was right in front of the altar. He often wondered if when they tore that old building down if they found much money.

JUNGE: Knowing the Lutherans as I do, you'd wonder that they wouldn't just rip up the grating or unscrew it and get down there and get every last penny.

GERINGER: They probably did but Dad often wondered if they got it all! Mom grew up in the Lutheran Church. The Swedes were all pretty much the Protestants.

JUNGE: But was she Missouri Synod?

GERINGER: As far as I know. Yeah, because that's where they went. See, Dad's family – until he met mom, they were at the Bethlehem Lutheran and then that church merged with the United Church of Christ so a lot of the Volga Germans became UCC members. Not just in Wheatland but in quite a number of other places so Dad's church must have been part of a loose synod of some kind but then merged with the old Congregational church so the Congregational is probably more like what many of them had because people in Worland and down in Colorado who contacted me once they found out my heritage said, "We went to the Congregational Church." In fact, I think there's a Congregational Church on the south side of Cheyenne that has some history of Volga Germans.

JUNGE: Which surprises me because being raised by a very strict Missouri Synod Lutheran like my dad was, even to this day, you do not even commune with fellow Lutherans unless they're of the same synod.

GERINGER: No, in fact, this district was one of the harshest of them all. Henry Nearman? I got to know Henry quite well. So, I grew up in Missouri Synod. Dad, when he and mom were married, joined that church. Missouri Synod. Pastor Karkow was the one who married them. No, actually, Pastor Borneman.

JUNGE: Borneman? Really? I knew both Nearman and Borneman. Interesting.

GERINGER: Borneman was a minister in Torrington. He married mom and dad and then he moved to Cheyenne.

JUNGE: When were your parents married?

GERINGER: 1941. Mom's family...Mom was born in Potter. Well, she was born on a farm between Potter and Dix –when they went to register her birth, they just picked one so her birthplace is Potter.

JUNGE: Neither of which is a town that anybody from New York City would recognize!

GERINGER: That's for sure. We had pictures of them moving over to Wheatland. My sister July calls it Grapes of Wrath –everything piled in the back of an old truck!

JUNGE: Is that where she was from then? Nebraska?

GERINGER: Yes.

JUNGE: They met because of this dating situation where he was supposed to marry her sister?

GERINGER: Well, like as with so many of the older families, somebody would try to introduce a couple that they hoped would spark it off. I don't know too much about the history its just that one of the stories that I'd heard was Dad was supposed to meet the younger sister but instead was attracted to Mom which worked out fine.

JUNGE: I have to ask you this personal question. I relate back to my own youth. Were they affectionate or did they seem distant as father and mother?

GERINGER: They were very close to us – both of them. In the older generations' ways, they never showed openly that much affection to each other but you would catch them in a private moment. Like one time -- Dad always had back trouble. When you work on a farm, you're going to have back trouble. He'd have Mom walk on his back or rub his back. He was lying on the couch one day, just relaxing and they thought it was just the two of them. It was a real poignant moment -- he just reached up and gave her a kiss. One of the few and only times we ever witnessed anything like that. So, they were real private with their affection.

JUNGE: How important was church and religion to your family?

GERINGER: Absolutely! Faith was the substance of everything that held the family together. It held their goals together. It was what provided hope in the future. So faith was as strong as anything they could have passed on to us.

JUNGE: How did it manifest itself besides church, which I assume you went to every Sunday.

GERINGER: We went to church every Sunday morning. Kids – all of our family were involved – at least the older ones were involved in the Walther League. At one point, my sister Betty was chair of the Walther League, Dad was chair of the men's group and my Mom was president of the Ladies Aide.

JUNGE: This sounds so typical!

GERINGER: You know they—the church family – the extended family of the church was the core of the community and as you say there was not much association with others especially you couldn't get along with the Catholics. That was just an ??????? because that was what was taught. Little by little, the kids got over that especially when because going to school -- you got to know kids that way. Wheatland was rather segregated. They had what was called “Mexican Town.” It was just a real poor section over on the southeast side of Wheatland where if you were of Hispanic origin you had to buy a house over there, rent a house over there...you couldn't live anywhere else and boy, when they crossed...whew! The community all talked! They even had separate burial plots in the cemetery for Hispanics. So, we experienced prejudice at an early age and it was something that we didn't understand. We weren't taught any kind of prejudice.

JUNGE: By your parents?

GERINGER: No, my parents held everybody to be equal.

JUNGE: In the sight of God. That's the way everybody was.

GERINGER: That's the way it was. So, the town like Wheatland that had a really rich history ..I don't know if it came with the others who had settled there...but over time, that all went away.

JUNGE: Did you pray before meals?

GERINGER: Oh yes. In fact, the kids all had their own prayers.

JUNGE: Really?

GERINGER: I supposed on Dad's side of the family they tried to teach kids different prayers all the time because – well – most of the kids could read. I guess all the kids went to school. In fact, Dad was the only one who didn't finish high school, I believe – The rest of them did. The oral history of faith was passed along in stories as well as prayers and so there were a lot of family prayers that were passed on. Probably the first prayer that any kid ever learned was...I don't remember German.....”Abba, Father in Heaven, Amen.”

JUNGE: Yes.

GERINGER: Probably learned that at about age 2 or 3.

JUNGE: Do you remember any of the prayers that you were forced....I should say required to memorize?

GERINGER: Not as a child except bedtime prayers.

JUNGE: What did you say at bedtime?

GERINGER: Come Lord Jesus...No, that was a table prayer.

JUNGE: Right. Something about “if I should die before I wake....”

GERINGER: No, that was “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray my soul to take.” But there was another one. “Bless Savior Dear, be always near. Keep me from evil, harm and fear.”

JUNGE: When was that?

GERINGER: That was from early childhood. So the Bless Savior Dear prayer was an easy one and then we learned Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. So Mom always said, “If you’re ready for bed, come and say your prayers” so she’d sit down and have us each say our prayers to her. It was always, “Good night, throw a kiss, sleep tight and see you in the morning!”

JUNGE: Don’t let the bedbugs bite.

GERINGER: Yes.

JUNGE: When I was in college, I went to a friend’s house in Meeker. He was a ranch kid and the father had this long, long prayer. I was a little embarrassed by it because we didn’t have such involved prayers in our home. It was basically, “Come Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.” And we’d all dig in but his was like a sermon. Did you guys do that?

GERINGER: No, not in our family. I think other parts of the family. Maybe in previous generations, but not Dad’s generation. In fact, Dad was so uncomfortable because he always felt like he wouldn’t say the right things. He was not comfortable saying prayers. That’s why Mom always took on the chore of teaching us the prayers.

JUNGE: She had the high school education?

GERINGER: Yes. But that’s as far as she went>

JUNGE: Was her background...I mean, we talked a little about your Dad...these are really important to me and I think they’ll be important to posterity. What kind of person was your mother? Was she as severe as your Dad?

GERINGER: No, she was a moderating influence? The toughest thing I ever had to endure with Mom was...well, let’s see...at about age five or six. I think I was about six or seven. My younger brother Ron was just a year and a half younger. We’d been outside playing late one evening and we came in the house. We’d picked up some words at school --- we had no idea what they meant. We walked in the house and we were having a conversation and I have no idea what we were saying but Mom dropped what she was doing and said, “What did you say?” We were told in no uncertain terms never to use those words in the house again. Well, that’s when we first learned there was profanity in the English language. Kids learn by emulating. I do recall, though later on, when I was about eight or nine years old, saying something rather profane and she grabbed me by the neck and shoved a bar of soap in my mouth.

JUNGE: She actually did?

GERINGER: She said, "I'll wash your mouth out with soap!"

JUNGE: We were always threatened with that but nobody ever did it.

GERINGER: She actually did it and then she very calmly went over and poured me a glass of water and said, "Go outside and rinse your mouth out." I was so mad, I broke that glass against the rose bush. But I respected her admonition from on. Mom was a very gentle person. When we got really unruly, she'd always say, "Now I'm going to go get the strap!" Now on Dad's side of the family, if you earned a whippin' you got a whippin'.

JUNGE: With a stick or a belt or razor strap?

GERINGER: Whatever. Or even Dad's boot! He'd haul off and give you a swift kick. But it was very rare he did that. It was just verbal almost all the time. If you did something wrong, you'd get a lecture...if you did it right...so Dad was a man of few words and Mom was a very understanding and compassionate person. Even when us kids took off and had a little party one night and brought some alcohol home. Years later, she said, "Yeah, I found some bottles stored under the bunkhouse –the dogs had kind of kicked them out so I pushed them back under." I'm thinking, "You probably knew way more than I thought!"

JUNGE: Well, then she wasn't exactly a moderating influence. She was just as strict as he was.

GERINGER: Well, they were both strict but in different ways.

JUNGE: So, your mother – was she as hard a worker as your dad was?

GERINGER: Oh yeah! Sheri can attest to that too. Our kids – when we didn't live in Wyoming. We lived in California for a while. There were times when our oldest daughters would come out and spend up to three weeks with "Grammy" and they still recall those amazing heartfelt memories. She was such a good teacher of just about anything that she had knowledge of. She liked to keep a garden. She gave me a real strong gardening instinct that I carried once I left the farm you know, once I left the farm, I did a lot of gardening. In fact, when I was growing up, I had my own garden in addition to having to work out in the field. As the oldest boy, I think my first experience driving the tractor was just about when I was four years old. I remember one fall, when we hadn't had a very good crop -- probably 1949, 1950. Some people had raised a field of corn and they went through with a mechanical picker and a lot of the corn had blown off on the grown. Dad was able to talk the guy for a very small price letting him go and pick up the corn and keep the corn.

JUNGE: Like the "gleaners."

GERINGER: Yeah. Well, my job was to drive the truck so Dad and a fellow that was helping him load – I think there were probably three people all together. They'd be throwing corn onto the truck

and he would say, "Drive up a little bit." So, I 'd let it go forward a little bit and he'd say "Whoa" and I'd jump down onto the floor and put my feet on the brake and clutch and then I'd brace myself against the seat until he said go again and then I'd jump up on the seat and drive a little. Well, one time, he said "whoa" so I got down and pushed on the brake and clutch and I sat there and I sat there. I mean my legs were twitching. It just hurt to hold that down! All of the sudden Dad opens the door and he says, "What are you doing?" I said, "Oh, waitin' for you to say 'go.'" He said, "Well, the truck died a long time ago!" I still remember that. I was no more than five at the time.

JUNGE: Well, you were required to do these things. Even when you're that age. You had to earn your room and board.

GERINGER: Well, the family couldn't get along if everybody didn't pitch in. It wasn't that you were forced to work. Everybody just knew that if you didn't work, somebody was not going to have what they needed. We got one new pair of jeans every year – usually at Easter time. One pair of shoes every year. That was it. There wasn't any luxury of any kind.

JUNGE: Well, what did you go to church in?

GERINGER: Well, we had some church clothes. We had church clothes that we wore every Sunday until they got to be worn out or too small. If they weren't worn out, the next one down got them. I never had to wear any hand-me-downs.

JUNGE: Because you were the...oldest son? Oh, you were spoiled?

GERINGER: By comparison, yes. The highest expectations too. I was the first one that that was tapped to go to work. Although my next brother Ron –he apparently didn't have the aptitude for farming that I did and Dad would just ride him –pretty hard on him. "You should do better!"

JUNGE: So what did he end up doing?

GERINGER: He became a bartender. He did some farming on his own but it wasn't anything you'd want to tell anybody about.

JUNGE: Did you inherit the farm then?

GERINGER: No. After high school, I went off to college. I paid my own way through college in part through advanced ROTC. Received my regular commission out of ROTC – see back in the early '60s all through, I believe, the Vietnam War, all able-bodied students at any land grant university had to enroll in ROTC. That was a reserve officer training corps in case they were needed and eventually they were. During my time there, they developed a program where the first year at Kansas State -- because I went to Kansas State University. They offered six scholarships for advanced ROTC and I was awarded one of them. That paid for books and tuition and some miscellaneous fees in my last two years of college. When I finished and received a regular commission I went to graduate school at the expense of the Air Force and that earned me an obligation of nine years – five for the regular commission and four for the --- I had to spend nine years on active duty because they had paid my way through graduate school. So at the end of nine

years of service to them ---that's getting into a story that might take a little longer to tell.

JUNGE: Can we catch that tomorrow?

GERINGER: Sure. Because the way we ended up here....it's a significant departure in the sense that I've made several decisions along the way that were contrary to mainstream thinking. You know -- "You shouldn't do this. What are you thinking?" I left the Air Force at a time when I was on the fast track to promotion, being requested by name by general officers all the way up to the Air Staff. That's probably a story in itself. Going off to Kansas State was another one of those contrary moves.

JUNGE: Yeah. Why didn't you go to UW?

GERINGER: Because I was told I had to.

JUNGE: By?

GERINGER: The high school principal. I wanted to go to MIT or Rensselaer Polytechnic Engineering School. I wanted to be an engineer. In fact, for a while I thought maybe even a nuclear engineer but I wanted to be an engineer. What I didn't realize was that you had to start applying way before. We had no high school counselor so I started applying in February of my senior year. Scholarships were all gone. Admissions were pretty much all taken care of. So I was kind of at loose ends when the high school principal called me down in early May and said "You have a full ride scholarship to the University of Wyoming. All fees, room and board paid." I said, "Well, I really don't want to go there. I want to go to an out-of-town engineering college."

JUNGE: But UW had an engineering college.

GERINGER: Well, I guess it's part of the whim of a young person that says why go to a college 70 miles from home.

JUNGE: So, you told that to the advisor?

GERINGER: I told that to the principal. I said, "I don't want to go there." He said, "You have to!" I said, "Why?" "Because of the honor of the school!" His name was Fred Kearns. He was just adamant. "You will go!" I went back upstairs to study hall and a friend of mine, a classmate said, "What's wrong with you?" I told him what had happened. He said, "Well, I'm going to Kansas State. My uncle is on the faculty. Why don't you apply there and go with me?" So, I did.

JUNGE; Nobody, by God, is going to tell Jim Geringer what to do!

GERINGER: Without good reason. You can tell me what to do but if you're just going to be arbitrary for a selfish motive, I'm not going to do it. And that was the difference. I'm very willing to listen but if people make decisions that are self-serving, I just ignore them. And that's the way I viewed it. There are a number of things that happened to me throughout my pre-high school, high school, college, Air Force and even here in politics where I drew the line and said, "My standards

are higher than that. I won't do what you're asking."

JUNGE: Your Dad would be proud!

GERINGER: Well, I hope so. I would never presume his feeling of pride although –the only time Dad came down and visited the Legislature – this would have been in the '80s – I was still in the house so this would have been probably '88 – we were walking through the House Chambers one day – Mom, Dad, I think one or two of my siblings, my wife Sherri. We ran into Jack Sidi who was Speaker of the House at the time. Jack knew of my first generation stature because that what he was. Jack was first generation American – I think Algeria. He was French. I can't remember if he was from France or Algeria but he was French either way. And he and Dad talked just a little bit. Dad came from a culture where it was "yep" or "nope." Not much else said. So I introduced Dad to Jack and they chatted a little bit -- mostly Jack chatting at Dad. And Jack said to Dad, "You must be pretty proud of your son!" And Dad goes, "Yeah." He just kind of chuckled and said, "Yeah." And you could tell he genuinely meant it. That was a high complement!

JUNGE: The fact that you even noticed that tells me that you really did want his approval.

GERINGER: Oh, I respected him tremendously! We'd clash because we were both hardheaded Germans that thought we knew a better way. He had his way and I had my way. We'd argue about it and then we'd do it his way! But I think we both learned.

JUNGE: Well, your Mother wasn't quite the same then? It's got to be my way?

GERINGER: No, Mom was more inclined to let us make a mistake and learn from it.

JUNGE: I want to go back because there's some things we didn't catch.--your grade school—where you went. Then your junior high and then something about high school. Do you remember starting school?

GERINGER: Yes. We didn't have kindergarten but I do remember visiting my older sister Betty's class one time in my best church clothes, behaving myself – "don't say anything." Because they would let younger siblings come visit as long as – I don't know how often they did it but I was able to do it I think once or twice.

JUNGE: What was the name of the school?

GERINGER: Wheatland Grade School. It's an administration building now. In fact, it was a junior high for a while until they built the new one but the original Wheatland Grade School still says "grade school" on the front.

JUNGE: How many rooms?

GERINGER: Oh, I think there were two rooms for each grade.

JUNGE: Two-story?

GERINGER: Yes. The basement was just for mechanical –the furnace room. And then the upper floor originally went through fifth grade and then as the town grew, they went through fourth grade. I was the first group of students to go to fifth grade in a separate school. That was over in a wing that was on the junior high so they had to segregate us fifth graders from the sixth and up. See...fifth and sixth, they didn't have middle school then so seventh and eight were junior high.

JUNGE: So fifth and sixth were still part of the elementary but separate?

GERINGER: Yes because of the space. They had built Libby Elementary. I think it was Libby to begin with that became Libby Elementary --- when they changed --the old junior high building. The original school building in Wheatland, we used to have vacation bible school there.

JUNGE: Did you like vacation bible school? I couldn't stand it because it took a couple weeks out of the summer!

GERINGER: I don't remember much about it because I was usually working.

JUNGE: Do you remember any significant teachers in grade school that you'll always remember-- or can you name them?

GERINGER: I can remember every one of them. Miss Olson for first grade. Mrs. Huges for second. I remember one encounter with her. She wrote something on the board in cursive and she said, "Does anybody know this word?" and I just rattled it off. She said, "Who said that?" Everybody pointed at me. Well, for whatever reason, I figured out how to read cursive because we didn't develop writing in cursive until I think like the fifth grade. My third grade teacher was Mrs. Davis. Fourth grade was Mrs. Hall. She was -- the first three -- all were good teachers -- nothing really stands out except Miss Olson. She didn't like little boys very well. If you misbehaved, she'd grab you by the ear and drag you out in the hallway and slam you up against the wall and make you stand there.
She'd drag you by the ear!

JUNGE: What is the background on that? My dad used to do that. It used to hurt like heck!

GERINGER: Well, they knew it hurt, I guess! Mrs. Hall was a teacher but they had a long-standing ranch so she was a person that set high expectations and she said, "You can do better than this." She was telling me, "You can do better."

JUNGE: Why, did you ever get in trouble or anything?

GERINGER: No, no. She meant in school on the subjects. She'd challenge me to do better in math. That kind of 'do better.'

JUNGE: You mean you weren't good in math?

GERINGER: I was. But she thought I could do better. She said, "You CAN do more. You should

learn more.” She wasn’t ridiculing, I guess in essence, she was saying “You have the ability, why don’t you take advantage of that and learn more?”

JUNGE: Did that have a positive influence on you?

GERINGER: Somewhat. Fifth grade was Mrs. Randall. Sixth grade was Mrs. Robinson. She always called me James. Boy, that irritated me! She was – bless her heart, she passed away in her ‘90s. That would have been just two years ago. We had a warm relationship ever since I left school. I was her pride and joy. Seventh grade there were a variety of teachers including Lee Dunham for English. I can’t remember all of those teachers. Eighth grade I had Mrs. Yates. Nellie Yates for math. She was another one who really encouraged me to do more. She encouraged me to enter the spelling bee.

JUNGE: Did you do well at that?

GERINGER: Yes, I did very well.

JUNGE: Why, do you have a photographic memory?

GERINGER: I remember words in a spatial way. Having read them on paper I can recall them, how they looked.

JUNGE: And where they are on the page?

GERINGER: Yes.

JUNGE: That’s photographic.

GERINGER: Photographic is when you don’t forget anything.

JUNGE: I would disagree because I think you have various levels of photographic. I see everything on a page, I can recall it. But I can tell you in a book for example if its in the upper left hand corner of the page...

GERINGER: But I call that more of a spatial reference than a photographic reference.

JUNGE: You think?

GERINGER: Yes. In fact, when I was in college I made myself sit toward the front to pay attention and always take notes. Once I had taken notes I almost never had to refer back to the notes. I didn’t remember them but they somehow, by having to think through taking the notes, focused my attention on the subject matter. Mrs. Yates in the eighth grade really encouraged me...she would call students to come forward and do math problems on the board like multiplication and long division without writing the numbers. Just do everything in your head and then put the answer up on top. We would have just little competitions.

JUNGE: Could you do it?

GERINGER: Yes. She would give us two numbers to divide out by long division. She would call different ones to come up and if you did well, then you stayed up and then another one came up. So, it was just a little friendly competition to see who could last the longest, but she would always call on me last because she knew I would outlast everybody.

JUNGE: Ok, then eighth and ninth?

GERINGER: That was eighth. Ninth grade was my first year of high school and the first year I got to go out for sports. I could go out for football and basketball but Dad really didn't like football – he still wanted to have help for harvest. Basketball because I could still do chores anytime – you had to do them morning and evening. We always did chores before we even had breakfast in the morning. But I could never go out for spring sports like track because of the spring work. Ninth grade – again, a variety of teachers. One who probably stands out most in my mind would have been my English teacher, senior in high school -- her name was Florence Axeford. She was another one of those people who wanted to encourage those she thought had great potential. I say that in all modesty because I didn't view myself as that but she did. So we visited every time I came back from college just to kind of reconnect. That's the kind of teacher....Mrs. Coleman in eighth grade taught history. We referred to her as the "old Battleaxe!" But she was one that made you learn! It's good for you!

JUNGE: Did you like history?

GERINGER: Yes!

JUNGE: See, a lot of people don't – they say I don't like names and dates.

GERINGER: She made history a little bit more alive. She gave meaning to it – not just memorization. Speaking of memorization – a young lady – she and I constantly contended for the highest grades in any class. She was the one that had a photographic memory. She could not tell you why something happened but she could put the answers down for everything.

JUNGE: Isn't that frustrating. She didn't get the meaning out of like you did!

GERINGER: No. And she beat me out for valedictorian.

JUNGE: So you became the salutatorian then?

GERINGER: I did – by one tenth of a point.

JUNGE: Well, your parents must have been proud of you.

GERINGER: Well, they were. And it wasn't that I wanted to be number one. It was just a matter of – we were always encouraged to.... the friendly competition – not a spiteful competition of any kind. The only election I ever lost was for class president in the junior class. Every time we had

any kind of an election like that...I was first elected to the student council in the fifth grade and then when I ran for class president...back then, the class would push people forward that they thought ought to be their representative. You didn't campaign for anything. So, there were two of us that were nominated for the class president. So, I did what I was taught to do – you vote for your opponent. You should never view yourself as better than your opponent. And, I don't know why but I ended up as one of the vote counters that you would have thought was a little bit strange. I and the girl who were counting the votes came to the realization it was a dead tie. She said, "What do we do?" I said, "You say that he's the winner." If I had voted for myself, I would have been president. I made the choice that it would be very embarrassing to know that I had voted for him as the better candidate than somehow than I ended up being the winner so I said, "just go tell the teacher that he won" and that was it.

JUNGE: That was fifth grade?

GERINGER: No, that was eleventh grade? Junior class.

JUNGE: But your first election was fifth grade. From then on, was there anything between that and the one that you lost?

GERINGER: I don't remember. I'm sure there was student council.

PODCAST 2

JUNGE: Today is the 23rd of June, 2009. Tuesday, the 23rd of June, 2009. This is Mark Junge and I'm in the house of Jim and Sherri Geringer. By the way, I noticed in your information booklet you gave me yesterday, the original spelling of was G-umlaut O so it would have been pronounced Geringer, right?

GERINGER: Yes, I would say upwards of 80% of the people who attempt the name mispronounce it as Gering-Jer and in order to emphasize that its not the soft g, I've even said Gering-Ger. But the Geringer – almost an invisible G – like if you were from Gering, you'd be a Gering-er.

JUNGE: So how would how you pronounce it correctly?

GERINGER: Gering-Er. I can't do umlauts very well. I don't have an umlaut throat.

JUNGE: I'll bet your dad did though.

GERINGER: Yeah, and his name being Gottlieb – you can imagine how many misspellings and mispronunciations of that there were. The sale barn used to send him notices of sale addressed to Gatlup, not Gottlieb.

JUNGE: Anyway, this is the second in a series of interviews I'm doing with Jim on behalf of the State of Wyoming, through the Humanities Council and thanks to Sue Castaneda who set this all up. Today, I'd like to pick up where we left off yesterday and talk about your meeting Sherri and

starting a family. But I'd also like to talk about your Air Force career, talk a little bit about the Laramie Basin Power Plant and farming and substitute teaching. Sort of a summary of your career prior to legislation and governance. How does that sound?

GERINGER: I'll follow your lead.

JUNGE: Again, I do appreciate your time on this. Just for Sherri's sake. I think this is going to be valuable. We're doing this for the State of Wyoming and posterity. And I think other people outside the state are going to be interested someday. But I think it's going to be good for your kids, and grandkids and your great-grandchildren.

GERINGER: As I mentioned in that interview with our granddaughter when she wanted to do an interview with a veteran, she said, "I had no idea that you did all this." I thought, "Well, I knew all about it." It made me pause for a moment and think, "I wonder of our five children, how many of them are even aware of my background" so very likely, you're correct.

JUNGE: Really? Is that because you're like your Dad in that your Dad didn't talk much about his background?

GERINGER: Well, I think it's kind of self-effacing where you don't call attention to yourself. As questions would come up or an incident would come up that reminded me of something, I might talk about it. Certainly when I was running for office, telling people in public what my background had been – those of our kids who were able to travel on occasion with us would get part of that but I don't have any idea how much they do or don't know short of asking them.

JUNGE: And they may not listen to this right away either. It may be awhile before they do. Ok, we left off yesterday with time wise...you were at K State?

GERINGER: Right. As I recall we were reflecting on how I ended up at Kansas State. Sherri is fond ofwell, let's put it this way. Quite often, during my term as governor when I would participate in University of Wyoming activities, I'd be introduced as "Governor Jim Geringer, who DID NOT got to the University of Wyoming." You know, I would comment that with our children having attending there and some in-laws and advanced degrees, we've paid for about ten different degrees at the University of Wyoming -- I think that pays the dues. Sherri came up with a far better answer. "It's simple. You came to Kansas State to meet me!" And that settles that.

SHERRI GERINGER: It shut them up!

JUNGE: Is that where you met her then?

GERINGER: Met her at K-State. During summer school.

JUNGE: Can you give me the circumstances?

GERINGER: It was summertime. A young man's fancy turns to other things. I guess that's about it. I think the first time we met was probably in economics class.

SG: Actually, I think your former girlfriend introduced us because she and I were roommates.

GERINGER: I thought we met in economics before that.

SG: Well, we had a class together but I think Jean introduced us.

GERINGER: We met at Kansas State.

SG: He was better at Econ than I was.

GERINGER: I didn't like the class either. I tried to study macroeconomics because I always wanted to see the big picture. I don't believe we had a very good professor at the time. It was one of those courses that was a prerequisite for part of my engineering background. I enjoyed engineering economics far better because then you calculated the cost of something -- the return on investment -- the practicalities of economics rather than the economist who always looks backward to predict the future. I thought that's a lousy way to predict the future. I think you want to see trends -- not just look backward. That's just a personal reflection. Over the course of the following year, we dated regularly. One evening when Sherri's parents had come to visit with us, we'd been out for a drive or an evening and went to the local dairy place to get ice cream. While we're sitting there visiting, I commented to them, "How would you like to have a son-in-law?" Sherri's an only child. Sherri's dad kind of said something to the effect, "That's nice." Sherri said, "Is that all you have to say?" Prior to that, when we were in Sherri's home in Kansas City, we'd gone out to a movie -- Dr. Zhivago -- and that evening, I proposed to Sherri. Probably, just as much of a subtle way. I said, "Hmmm. I've been thinking about what it would be like to be married to you." And she said, "And what was your conclusion?" I said, "Well...it'd be good." And it has been. 42 years. Her parents apparently were so accustomed to having me around by that time, they just assumed. "Hmm. Son-in-law. Yeah, sure."

JUNGE: This sounds like something out of Prairie Home Companion. How long after you met her that you proposed.

SG: We met at the beginning of summer school and it was during Christmas vacation.

GERINGER: That's when it was. I was thinking January. Somewhere right after Christmas. Probably a half of year of dating.

JUNGE: This is another question. When did you know you wanted to marry him?

GERINGER: I don't know. There wasn't any instant revelation. It wasn't like my epiphany.

SG: Keep asking these questions. These are things I want to know too!

JUNGE: A lot of people, I talked to Jim, say it was love at first sight. It was just something. Was it love at first sight with you? Was there something chemical going on?

GERINGER: I suppose with any relationship, there's chemical. There was just a genuine interest, a mutual interest -- one with the other. Hmm. During that summer when we first met -- I believe I recalled yesterday, I didn't have much money when I went off to college. Paid my own way except for what the Air Force did by scholarship. Borrowed money. My transportation was a 125 cc Ducate motorcycle that didn't have a starter so I'd have to push it to get it started which was pretty exciting. So, Sherri and I went out motorcycling one day and there was a lesson hard taught. It's when we both learned that you shouldn't go out motorcycling in shorts! We went out on top of a hill to get the vantage view of Manhattan, Kansas during the daylight. During the evening, it was a favorite place for young couples. We went up there during the day just to see what it was like in the daylight. I had a little bit of a misstep with the motorcycle and laid it over on its side. Sherri's first concern was, "Oh, the oil is running out" and I said, "Yeah, but the muffler is laying on my leg." So, we managed to both get up and make our way back town and I had a scar from that muffler burn for quite a while so Sherri's etched in my leg....

SG: As well as in his heart.

GERINGER: As well as in my heart, yes, that's for sure!

JUNGE: But, going back to that moment. I can tell you -- Ardith and I have been married as long as you have I can tell you that first moment that I saw her. I describe it. I can almost see it. Was yours a little more casual?

GERINGER: It was a more casual.

JUNGE: But how did you meet? Was it in a class and you went up and said, "Hi, I'm Jim Geringer. Who are you?"

GERINGER: I really don't know.

SG: You were an RA for the summer.

GERINGER: Residence hall assistant.

SG: The girl that he had dated who was then dating a fraternity brother of his -- she and I were roommates. She is the one; she saw Jim in the hallway and said, "Oh, meet my roommate." That's when we actually first met. That was the introduction. That was before classes had actually started. You get there a day or two early. Then we discovered that we were in the economics class together. We didn't usually walk to class together because we had differentbut we walked back to the dorm together.

JUNGE: What was your courtship like?

GERINGER: Uh, frugal! We did things that didn't require a lot of money. When we became engaged and went down and bought our rings, I think we paid about \$25 each for the rings. Still have them.

SG: These are the rings that we were married with.

JUNGE: They call it silver-gold?

GERINGER: It's pretty durable because this thing is totally smooth – it used to have a lot of etchings in it.

SG: Durable, like us.

GERINGER: She's got a way with words.

SG: I was just going to say, that may have been part of the appeal. I was an only child and my parents were paying for my education but to be able to do things that you didn't have to spend a lot of money on, it was just fun to be together. That was...when you're sitting in a movie theater, you're not visiting with each other, but when you're on a motorcycle or at the lake....

GERINGER: Yeah, we'd do out the lake a lot. There's a reservoir out there called Tuttle Creek Reservoir and then there's a smaller reservoir below and we called it Tuttle Puddle. It was just nice to be out on a fine day with a fine lady enjoying life! We did a lot like that.

JUNGE: So, you didn't have a lot of money.

SG: No, but we didn't need it.

GERINGER: When we were first married and had our first child, Jenny, we would be so short of money, we'd go out along the roadway and pick up pop bottles and turn them in for deposits so we could buy diapers. In fact, after I had completed my work in graduate school and was assigned to California, we never did things on our own that cost money. We did all the things that were low cost or no cost because so many people wanted to come out and enjoy southern California and when they came out then we would have saved up enough to take them to Disney Land or Knotts Berry Farm or places like that. But we would go to the Arboretum or different places like that didn't cost money because there wasn't a lot. I think my take home pay was \$600 every two weeks.

SG: Well, with the Air Force, too, you could go there and get discount tickets for Disney Land. Everybody would play their own way. It's not like we did it. We gave them a place to stay.

JUNGE: Let's go back. We've skipped clear over to California and you're still at K-State. Were you married in Manhattan?

SG: We actually got married in Kansas City because that's where my home was, where my parents lived. But it was while we were going to college but as a young married couple, we lived in married student housing for a while and then we found a little house to rent.

GERINGER: I was student body president for one year.

JUNGE: At K- State? What year was that?

GERINGER: Might have been '66 or '67.

JUNGE: To me, it was interesting that you were student body president. Well, you can go all the way back to you fifth grade – you were student body president.

GERINGER: I never had aspirations for holding office. I just always ended up doing things like that.

JUNGE: Did you notice that in him?

SG: No, I don't think I did. I knew that he was a leader. That part comes through but as far as political aspirations. No, I don't think so. I think that was just a way that he could use his leadership skills and as opportunities presented themselves then he did that. In the church, he was a leader. We were youth leaders at the church we went to in California. In the Air Force he was a leader by virtue of rank and inclination. When we came back to Wyoming, and I know I'm getting way ahead, when we came back to Wyoming, one of his biggest concerns was "What will I do with my time? I can't just sit on a tractor in a field."

GERINGER: You need mental stimulation. Problem solving.

SG: That opportunity for the legislature appeared. Elective political leanings was the way became the way that he went.

JUNGE: What was your early marriage like? What was life like for you two. You obviously weren't penniless but you didn't have much.

SG: No, we didn't but we didn't need much. When you make your own entertainment by.... At the time, we could afford to go for a ride...gas was 15 or 20 cents a gallon... you could afford to take a drive and go have a picnic. Those were the things that we liked to do. You could throw your baby in a car seat and go chase lightning. You made your own fun!

GERINGER: To give you an idea of how much we did on our own, when I graduated from college and then was pursuing my masters, Sherri's folks for my graduation bought me a sewing machine. I never learned how to sew but Sherri did. In fact, she stitched clothes for most of the family for quite a few years.

JUNGE: Your first child came when? How long after you were married?

GERINGER: We were married in March and she was born in late September.

JUNGE: Maybe this is too personal because Ardith and I didn't really plan ours but did you plan your children?

GERINGER: Sort of. Once I asked Sherri how many children we ought to have and she said five and we ended up with five.

SG: But the last one was unexpected. Mostly, we did. Being an only child, I grew up with lots and lots of cousins that were in families with five and six kids so I knew I wanted a large family and Jim came from a large family so he was fine with that.

GERINGER: Extended families – both of our families really meant a lot to all the members of the extended family. We observed each other's birthdays, difficult days, shared experiences of any kind from graduations to even the simpler activities such as sporting activities. I think that's what a lot of families miss today -- they don't spend time together. Well, because church became such a major part of our life. How we participated in church. Extended family was not only our immediate relatives but also the extended faith family so I think that has such a positive influence not only on us personally but the people we associate with –especially our children.

JUNGE: Were you of the same faith?

SG: I was a same faith, so yes, we're of the same faith in that we were both Christians. The differences between the denominations were fairly minor.

JUNGE: So, there was no problem with your parents? Your marrying Jim.

SG: No. None at all. They were very pleased with it. My Dad was pleased that Jim was an engineer because my Dad was an engineer. Now, it's a family tradition. Our son is too.

JUNGE: Sometimes, they say you marry a man who is like your father. Is that true?

SG: I think so. In a lot of ways, my father was a man of great character and so is Jim. He was a logical thinker but a loving person and so is Jim. There are traits like that that are very similar. I adored my Dad! I kind of feel the same about that guy!!

JUNGE: Are they still alive?

SG: No, none of our parents are?

JUNGE: So, your children came about every two years?

SG: The first two were 20 months apart and then we started spacing them out a little bit more.

GERINGER: The youngest to oldest is a 17-year spread. The last three were five years apart.

SG: The youngest wasn't expected but that was ok, she's been a real blessing too!

GERINGER: Let's see – '72, '77, and '84.

SG: Five years from the first one.

JUNGE: What did you expect life was going to be like? Did you expect to be a farm wife? An Air

Force wife? What was your expectation?

SG: I don't know that I really thought about it. I just knew that whatever we did that it would be good. We would have a good time together. We'd get through the hard times together and have a family. As far as the specific things that we would do professionally or whatever, that wasn't on my radar, I don't think.

GERINGER: We always talked through everything. Neither one of us made decisions independently. We said, "Well, this is what we're going to do." Probably one of the most memorable ones was after I'd been in the Air Force ten years. Not quite ten. Well, I guess it was. I'd received notification that I had a binding request by a three-star general to go work for him and then move on up to the Air Staff and this was within NORAD, as they called it -- North American Aerospace Defense Command. At the time, we were thinking of leaving the Air Force but hadn't made a decision. We'd even gone and looked at some property near Wheatland. And this was just before the Big Thompson Canyon flood. We even drove up the Big Thompson Canyon the week before it flooded in Colorado. Came back from that little excursion from looking for land up there and looking for land in Wheatland. The next work day, the Lt. colonel who was my supervisor at the time came in with a TWIX, a telecoded message which they used to type out on their little machines in the Air Force --the military general --He said "Here are your orders." I said, "For what?" He said, "This general officer wants you to go to work for him." I said, "Well, I don't think I'm ready to do that." He said, "You don't have a choice. Binding request. You can't turn it down." Well, as I mentioned yesterday, if you tell me I can't do something arbitrarily, I might resist that a little bit. I did what I thought any common sense person would do. I read the regulations and it says, "You shall accept the orders unless you decline and resign your commission within your position within seven days of notification of orders." So, here we are with three small children. Sherri's pregnant with our fourth. We'd raised a big garden that summer. Actually, it was still pretty early in the summer. We were sitting on the floor in our kitchen hulling peas talking over our future and we made the decision that I'd separate from the Air Force without a thought of what I would be doing. Because the type of job that I was in was so demanding that I knew I would be spending 12, 14 or more hours a day doing things that were of good cause but my family was not important at all to the Air Force. The military did not take care of families at all during our time in the military. They have since changed dramatically. But the family was incidental. The family oftentimes was interference. I felt that under that circumstance we would miss too much of how our children grew up. That was the fundamental reason we left the Air Force. That was a powerful decision that we didn't take lightly.

JUNGE: What was your opinion?

SG: Well, as Jim said, we talked about it together. It was a little frightening but on the other hand, sometimes you take a step of faith know it was the right thing to do and for the reasons he said, it was right. His career progression -- we would have ended up in Washington, D.C. That wasn't where we wanted to raise our family. Especially with him being as involved time wise. It was frightening in that he gets out of the Air Force and there's no medical care and here I am pregnant....

GERINGER: And no job.

SG: And no job. We knew that we could move to Wheatland. I can remember you saying, “Even if I have to take a job pumping gas, at least the cost of living is less there.” I said, “Ok.” It was not an easy decision but there was a great deal of comfort in knowing that it was the right decision.

JUNGE: The right decision in your heart. I would have been terribly insecure....I mean this organization had served as a blanket or a coverlet for you.....

SG: But you have confidence in your own abilities too.

GERINGER: Your abilities and your faith is probably the strongest motivation. Take a step and see what happens. Even if everything isn't perfectly mapped out, make the best of whatever circumstance you're in.

SG: And knowing that in Wheatland, there is that safety net of the family being there too. Until we could find a place to live, we stayed with Jim's folks for three months.

GERINGER: Less than that....we located a house early on. The lady wanted to sell it because she wanted to move to Iowa to a retirement community. She must have lived in the house 40 or 50 years.....she was a widow.

SG: She did. It was the house you were born in.

GERINGER: It was the house I was born in. We were anxious for her to move out almost immediately. She was so slow about it. I'd even go in and help her pack. She departed on a real snowy day in February and our daughter Mary was born on January 31st. Our grand plan was three weeks after arriving in Wheatland, we'd move into that house. It was more like three months. The day we went to Wheatland from when I separated from the Air Force – the most dramatic moment—up until that point, ten years of my life -- every admission to anything -- to get on base, to go to the base exchange, to go to the commissary, to go for medical care -- you showed your ID. I'm sitting in the office doing the out-processing and the clerk says, “Hand me your ID.” So I did, just kind of automatically and he takes it with these huge scissors and goes snip! I thought, “Boy, this is pretty final!” This is it! So, we ended up driving to Wheatland right around Thanksgiving. The first thing I did was --went into the employment office and I said, “I'm looking for a job.” And the lady – Sam, I think her name was – worked for the State of Wyoming. She said, “Well, let's take your employment history.” So, she got my credentials, my degree, my history, my background, my current work and all that. Then she paused and said, “You're over qualified!” I said, “Ok.” It turned out that both Burns and McDonell who was a supervising engineering for the construction of a new power plant in Wheatland as well as the owner of Basin Electric Power Cooperative -- both were looking for engineers. I completed the paperwork. Interviewed on a Friday and got the job on a Monday within a week of going to Wheatland so who's to say that our confidence had been misplaced?

JUNGE: But just the same, it took courage for both of you to make that decision!

SG: I don't think at the time we thought about courage. It was the next step.

GERINGER: Yeah. We decided the reasons we wanted to leave. We left and that was that. It wasn't any agonizing decision –it was a well thought through decision. There was some uncertainty associated with it. We just felt like -- All of our married life, even prior in our individual life we'd always made the best of any circumstance and that was the guiding light in our faith.

JUNGE: Did you ever consider a career, Sherri?

SG: No, not that much. Had I finished my degree at Kansas State I might have gone into interior design which is what I was studying and done that. I was very happy raising our children and home and sewing. When we moved to Wheatland, Jim's mom taught me how to can. I never did milk the cow. Jim always did that.

GERINGER: We milked the cows, slopped the hogs, and fed the chickens. We raised most of our own food.

SG: I helped churn butter. I helped pull cows.

GERINGER: Her cousins couldn't believe that Sherri, who had probably only set foot on her uncle's farm occasionally, would go out at two in the morning and help hold the flashlight while we pulled a calf.

JUNGE: Did you ever finish your degree?

SG: No, I didn't ever finish it.

JUNGE: Did you ever regret that?

SG: From time to time I have wanted to finish it but to regret it that I didn't, no. There was a time when we were in California that if we hadn't had to pay out-of-state tuition that I might have and I've taken some community college classes from time to time but actually need the piece of paper – no.

JUNGE: What's been the most difficult part of your marriage?

SG: Hmmm. Oh gosh. Probably the time that he was Governor.

JUNGE: Why?

SG: Because I didn't have his time. We were willing to do it. When you go into it, you don't realize how much time it's going to take. That takes a lot of adjustment, when you're accustomed, as we were to talking things over and making decisions together. And, all of the sudden – and rightly so – he was so focused on the State that when he would come home and I would need to tell him something about our kids – he would want to make a decision and do something about it. I would have to say, "No, this is just information." He would go into the huge closet into the bedroom to change clothes to get ready to go to the next event and I'd be telling him...I'd tell

people we mastered the two-minute conversation because I'd be telling him what happened with our children or something that he needed to know as far as the family...

GERINGER: Or what difficulty had come up and I'd say, "Well, we need to do this..." and she'd say, "No. This is just for information."

JUNGE: Well, the State was like a mistress. I don't want to put it in a derogatory terms but...

GERINGER: I wouldn't say mistress. It was a calling.

SG: Yeah. It was a calling. It was a commitment. And because it was a decision we had made together and then ran by the kids to see what they thought and if they had had big objections, he would have reconsidered too.

GERINGER: As I mentioned yesterday, when it came time to schedule, Sherri was in on all scheduling meetings. If there was a need, Sherri had absolute authority to preempt my schedule. She used it selectively. She could preempt anything on my schedule.

JUNGE: Did that happen?

GERINGER: Yeah, every once in awhile. Like Becky's volleyball game...

JUNGE: But no human being begrudges you the right to do something that. You're a public servant.

SG: The one time that somebody was really ugly about it -- Jim's aunt had passed away and he was supposed to go to Lander and do an event there. His scheduler called and said, "He has had this family situation and he needs to go a funeral." The organizer of the event got pretty ugly about it. That's the only time that people weren't understanding.

JUNGE: You said there was another person.

GERINGER: Christie. She schedules for Cynthia Lummis who is our US Congress woman now. She was my scheduler for nine years. The average duration for a scheduler in a governor's is one and a half years. It's extraordinary pressure. They have to field all the requests. All the really nasty words about "Well, you tell that guy that I work for him and he'd better be come to my event." Well, Christie in her nice way would defuse all those circumstances but that's high stress. And, the way that we did scheduling in the office -- the two or three senior staff -- Rita, Margaret, Jimmy, typically -- Christie would sit down with all the requests that had come in and go through them and say "accept, recommend, neutral" -- they'd always do that and then I'd have the final say. We tried for a while to just put things on the calendar for what they knew were important for the agenda or my goals or the overall things that we were trying to put forward for the state. And every now and then something would be overlooked that I really wanted to do so I said, "Whoa! We gotta do this! It helps me for you to screen them but I have to have final say because there might be things that you don't know that I do." Or somebody had talked to me personally that I want to accept. Of course they always cringed over that because, "What did you do now to over commit?"

As with my entire life, when you committed to do something, you did your best and I think that is one of the reasons that the governorship took so much time. I said I would give it my best so I gave it more than most people would. I typically worked 90 hours a week.

JUNGE: Nights and weekends?

GERINGER: We typically kept Sunday open unless just absolutely something had to go on.

SG: We were successful at that probably half the time. Sometimes he would have to travel on Sunday and it was just unavoidable but the first rule was “try to keep the Sundays open.”

JUNGE: Sherri, did you ever expect that Jim’s career would ever lead to the legislature and then to the governorship?

SG: No, I didn’t. I had no inclination that he would ever be governor.

JUNGE: How did you adjust to all that?

SG: Like I adjusted to everything else. It’s where our path led us and you do your part. You look at something like that as an opportunity for service. Jim served in one way as Governor and I served in another way as the First Lady. We still had two children at home when he was elected. Through the whole time in office, we had one child at home so that was a priority. But there are lots and lots of ways that you can help people when you’re in that position that you can’t in any other way, any other time.

GERINGER: Sherri hasn’t really told you that much about all the things she has helped organize and manage -- from community events to just being a good sounding board for counseling for me both in career decisions and other significant decisions. Not counseling as in “you must do this” -- it’s more like “well, let’s think about this for a minute.” So, her wisdom and counsel are far greater than anything I could do on my own. As a career, she’s done extraordinarily with that. And frankly, she’s a great manager and organizer. She’s done so many different projects she probably can’t count them all herself.

JUNGE: What are some of the significant ones?

GERINGER: Community events in Wheatland. CommunityFest. She and Carolyn did that. We were head youth counselors at our church in California. Together – it wasn’t one or the other – it was us together. There were 27 counselor couples and we were the lead ones for 425 youth.

SG: Susan Thomas and I were the ones that started Race for the Cure in Wyoming.

JUNGE: Really?

SG: Yes. Susan wanted to do something together. She wanted to do something in the State but being Washington D.C. it was difficult for her to do something within in the State so she said, ‘Sherri, let’s partner on something together.’ We looked around to see what we could do and

decided that Wyoming could use Race for the Cure and...

JUNGE: So you started that?

SG: Yes.

JUNGE: That is really a big, big thing?

GERINGER: We expected 400 runners the first year and there were about 700.

SG: It wasn't without some controversy but we got through that. Susan did a lot of the big fund raising in DC because she had those contacts and I did the on the ground stuff here in Wyoming.

GERINGER: And a lot of just the event. What Sherri does extraordinarily well is draw other people in and use their talent and frankly help them take the credit.

JUNGE: You have not demanded a lot of credit. You never struck me as that type of person when you were in office. Never.

SG: Well, I don't need the credit. I'm not the important person in all of this. The important thing is what's getting done. To raise the money for breast cancer research and to acknowledge so many people who have had the disease and the support not only...this is where Jim was so great with all of this because he would say, "It's not just the woman who gets breast cancer. It's the family and so, men – you need to be right there..."

GERINGER: It affects the whole family.

SG: And so, that's what important. It's like bringing Safe Kids to Wyoming. The National Safe Kids. It's not that I did something -- it's that children are getting bike helmets and learning to be safe in the water and all of these things. It's not important that I get the credit. It's what the result is.

JUNGE: But, Jane Sullivan, the previous First Lady, was interested in wildflowers. It's quite a contrast to what you decided you wanted to do as First Lady.

GERINGER: Sherri's very people centered.

SG: Each First Lady across the country gets to choose what is important to her. This is the biggest unpaid job that you can have. In Wyoming, we are so fortunate because the Governor's Residence is paid for by the State. The operating budget is there and the First Lady has a travel budget. In many states, there is no travel budget for the First Lady. And, the First Lady doesn't have hire and fire power over even an assistant for herself. I think that all of them have someone -- maybe not at the residence, some of them have someone in the Governor's office. So, it's a Governor's staff person who works with the First Lady.

JUNGE: But there was a person at the front door, a secretary so to speak, a receptionist.

GERINGER: No, Sherri had an assistant who worked in the office adjacent to her but anybody who met people at the door were volunteers.

SG: Museum volunteers.

JUNGE: You didn't have any choice in the selection of....

SG: No, I did, but some places they don't. We're very fortunate in Wyoming that the people of Wyoming and the Legislature are so willing to allow the First Lady the resources that she need to do the job.

GERINGER: There's a whole separate story that could be told about the First Ladies, the First Families we've met who would have residences – mansions if you will because some of them are old mansions -- difficult for upkeep, required a lot of labor and they used prison labor. We didn't have to go through that.

SG: Well, and they would have to...if there needed to be...for example, one of the southern states...they needed a new roof and it was an historic mansion but that's where they lived. The first lady had to raise the money for a new roof so she sold the slate tiles from the old roof to raise money for a new roof. I didn't have to do things like that. I could spend my time on people projects.

JUNGE: Well, this is the Equality State!

GERINGER: Although almost without exception including Wyoming, if you have any major renovation to the residence or the mansion it has to be private fundraising which I think is an undesirable situation because you end up cultivating influence in ways that are probably not exactly appropriate -- those who raise the most money to provide amenities for a sitting governor could easily be called into question about what kind of relationship now has to ensue because there is an implied obligation and so it's not a good practice in any state including Wyoming.

SG: But there are certain special projects that you do for example -- the Children's Discovery Park that we established on the grounds of the Governor's Residence. I had a Residence Foundation...

JUNGE: Listen, I didn't mean to say that Jane did nothing as First Lady....

SG: Oh, I know!

JUNGE: But you do have choices.

SG: Yes, you do have choices, but we asked high school students from around the state to sculpt animals, Wyoming animals or birds to put in this Discovery Park and the Foundation raised the money to have the sculptures bronzed – the ones that went through the selection process and then placed in the Discover Park. Not just animals but there were other things that were part of the

whole thing. So that was --- there are times that you do some private fund raising but it's for a specific project so it's very clear that there's no commitment.

GERINGER: Yeah, because it was for the kids, not for the governor or his wife.

JUNGE: What were the highlights of Jim's gubernatorial career and your first lady career?

SG: Gosh, I'd have to say probably the first thing was being able to have...to be part of a formal dinner at the White House. Who ever thought that a girl from Kansas City married to a Wyoming farmer would ever be able to have dinner at the White House? And that was..... Then the traveling. The places that we got to go. That was always so much fun! But, being in Wyoming and doing things with and for Wyoming people was probably ultimately the best thing that happened as part of his career.

JUNGE: You both talk about public service. When I said your job was a mistress and you immediately said it was a "calling" and that goes back to my Lutheran background where it's not necessarily a like, it's a calling. A pastor feels a calling and he deliberates and he prays and he prays until he receives a word and he feels a calling. Did you feel that way, that it was a calling?

SG: Yes, as Jim's partner in life, I didn't seek for him the governorship but there was a role for me when he had it so I felt that's part of what I was called to do too.

JUNGE: Were you ever afraid of that challenge?

SG: Oh, probably from time to time. Maybe skeptical that I had the abilities to handle it from time to time.

GERINGER: And then when you're hanging out with people that you've only read about before, you wonder, "Hmmm. How will I handle this?"

SG: Right. And then when you're around other first ladies who just seem so confident and able and professional about what they're doing and then you figure out, "Wait a minute! When they started they were as insecure as you are!"

JUNGE: Did you grow in the job?

GERINGER: Yes.

SG: Definitely! In fact Jim has said, "If I could start over again with the knowledge that I have now about how to do it!"

GERINGER: Yeah, you're best qualified to be governor the last you're in office, not the first day!

JUNGE: Well, that was one of the concluding questions I was going to do in the interview on Friday.

GERINGER: Well, I'll probably forget by then. We went a long way from K-State here!

JUNGE: Yeah, we did.

GERINGER: I have one comment about Jane's wildflowers. It's a great idea and she pretty much attempted to stay unique to Wyoming native wildflowers but she introduced blue flax as one of her chosen wildflowers, which is a noxious weed. I don't think she realized at the time that blue flax is just not an appropriate to go spreading all along the median strips of the highways and let the wind carry them in to the pastures because its just not healthy for grazing beasts!

JUNGE: Sherri, there's another question I wanted to ask you. Did you feel obligated to protect your kids from the environment in which they found themselves now in this new enlarged large life that you all had?

SG: Most of the time now. When we first came down here, there are some pretty humorous stories about when we first came down here.

JUNGE: Go ahead! Let's get some of this down This is fun.

SG: Well, it's not where you expected this interview to go.

JUNGE: Go ahead. As long as you've got time!

SG: When we took our second youngest daughter to Central High School, I took her to get her registered. She was a junior. We walked into the office and I introduced us. The secretary said, "I'll get the junior counselor." So, this counselor came out and someone else came out at the same and I wasn't paying much attention to who he was. So, I introduced myself and we chatted a little bit and he said, "Now what brings you to Cheyenne!" I was just astounded because Jim's name had been all over the news. I said, "Well, my husband was elected governor." The other gentleman who was standing off in the corner just started laughing and of course the whole school new about it within 20 minutes I think. It turns out that the junior counselor was also a social studies teacher.

GERINGER: The one who most likely would have known.

SG: It's interesting because our daughter would only say when people would ask, "What does your Dad do? You're the new kid in school." She would say, "He works for state government." So, she wanted to keep a low profile. In fact, both of our kids wanted to keep a pretty low profile. So we helped them do that.

GERINGER: We wanted them to be known for who they were, not who I was.

SG: Right. And so, when our youngest daughter would play basketball, Jim would come in right after the game had started. Usually, because he was running a little bit behind but to not make a big entrance. Just to slip in.

GERINGER: Didn't have security. Just slip in and be Dad.

SG: Every once in a while there would be something that would come up. There was one fellow that was kind of an odd ball. Harmless, but an oddball. He wanted to know our youngest daughter's birthday so that he could send her a card or flowers or something and we said, "No. You don't need to know her birthday."

GERINGER: Mary, our next daughter, wasI guess she was in a play...play practice one time and a few other kids were sitting there between scenes and chatting about things and as one thing led to another it became obvious that she was living at the Governor's Residence and one girl asked why and my daughter said, "Well, my Dad's the Governor." And she said, "Oh, oh that's right. Your Dad's Jim Sullivan!"

SG: But the media was not obnoxious. They aren't obnoxious in Wyoming so in terms from having to protect the kids from tv cameras or interviewers we didn't....

GERINER: They're not paparazzi but they were ...for the criticism I took on some occasion –even some very unfriendly or ...well, uncharacteristically harsh – I'm not sure how to put it. It's always harder on the family than it is on the principle. I would say that for any elected person. No matter how hard the criticism is, it's harder on the family because they are either not in the position to speak out or feel that they shouldn't or just have to internalize it.

PODCAST 3

JUNGE: Do you think that your being Governor and First Lady affect the kids in any negative way at all?

SG: They didn't talk about it much then but they do now. We had two kids at the University and of course, Jim is conservative and the University setting tends to be pretty liberal and there were some professors that were a lot harsher than they needed to be.

GERINGER: And they believed in stereotypes. I was of the wrong political faith so automatically I was suspect so they were harsh simply because of that. The first six years I was Governor were very difficult budget times. The state budget has tripled since I left office. Even with all those difficult budget times, we increased the University's funding by 40% while everything else had to be kind of reallocated. We always kept education on a high mark. State employees always had pay raises so we took care of the people who were doing the work and yet there was a tendency to stereotype my political faith by some and in the class room which is the last places where it should happen, at least two of our children had to experience it in very negative ways.

JUNGE: How did they handle it?

SG: They basically brushed it off and as I said, they didn't talk to us about it because they didn't want it to have an affect on Jim.

JUNGE: It came out later?

SG: It came out later. Our youngest daughter – at one point someone said to her, "Well, your Dad

did thus and such and I sure wouldn't vote for him!" She said, "Well, you're not old enough to vote anyway!"

JUNGE: On the other side of the picture or coin, do you think there were some advantages?

SG: I think particularly for the youngest one, and her older siblings would say the same, she got to travel with us. She went to Russia with us. She went to France and Scotland with us. So there were definitely some advantages for her. But the others, we tried to take them where we could. We took them to the presidential inauguration – several of them went to that with us. We took a couple of the grandkids to the National Governor's Association family outings. There were some advantages for them.

GERINGER: And we always paid their way. We always paid an offset. We never took advantage of any kind of free status.....I was the only one who ever flew for free if you will. We paid for everything else. And it wasn't required, if you. I was the one who set the standard. If someone took advantage of an empty seat on a state plane, they paid their way.

JUNGE: Well, you must have encountered some antipathy or some obstruction when you didn't play the good old boy attitude.

GERINGER: I recall one time when a group of people who I had visited extensively with ahead of the election scheduled an appointment, came into my office and laid out a proposal –they were from the energy/mineral industry and I said that's wasn't the way that I was going to go and they made it very clear that they had helped in my election and that I owed them something and I said, "The only thing I owe you is the route to the door. You can leave my office!"

JUNGE: Whoa! You were going back to your kids. You got to see your kids every day.

GERINGER: Yes. We had a practice when I was farming. I went from the space program to farming. It's one of those logical progressions for careers, you know.

JUNGE: I never understood that. I never understood that until you explained!

GERINGER: In fact, most people would think that I was only a farmer. They don't know the previous history of the space program. When we first went back to farming, it was so hard because we borrowed equipment, rented land -- we didn't have any money to do anything to own it outright. We usually ended up with farms that no one else would take. I would clean them up. I learned a lot about stewardship and conservation because it was in my ethic anyway. At least on two occasions, we cleaned them up, made a productive unit out of it and then the landlord sold it! So, initially, I followed my Dad's example – you just work until you're basically exhausted, come in, eat supper, go to bed and get up in the morning. Sherri and the kids would hold dinner until I got back because that's what my family did. The kids eating at 9:30, 10 o'clock at night was so disruptive to their routine. I had a neighbor across the road who always knocked off at about 6 o'clock and go in for dinner and then come out later if he had to do some work. I got to thinking about that and Sherri and I decided let's do dinner – supper as we called it – supper at about 6 o'clock, 6:30 – something like that. And I'll make a point to get in the house no matter what I'm

doing so the kids can visit. We can be together so we can at least talk about things before they go off to do home work or other activities. It was such an improvement! It was just remarkable. I was actually more productive too I think. So we carried that tradition into the office as Governor. I was pretty faithful about the 6:30 appointment. Go home and have supper with the family and then if I had to go off to other activities I would, but I at least we had family time together and the kids had a predictable schedule they could rely on.

JUNGE: And you had a big part in establishing that?

SG: Well, we did it together but yeah. When the spring work starts on the farm, you work from before the sun comes up until after it goes down.

GERINGER: Dark 'til dark.

SG: When the kids have to get up early the next morning to go to school, it just doesn't work well. So, during summer vacation it's not as hard but once you establish that routine, you need to keep it up.

GERINGER: The kids had their own chores too. Like Val had 4-H projects and our son Rob wanted earn some money so I said, "Ok, this plot of land is yours. You work it from start to finish. You make all the decisions and whatever you make, pay me custom rates for equipment – you can keep." He did so good that first year, he bought a four-wheeler. Paid \$3,500 cash for it.

JUNGE: You showed leadership even in farming. And I shouldn't say just farming or even in farming but you showed leadership ... I read here even in your CV. You were involved in the National Bean Marketing Cooperative, the Wheatland COOP, the Wheatland REA. Were you an organizer? Were you like your Dad in that respect?

GERINGER: I was like Dad and his brother John, who was also a farmer – my Uncle John. It's that philosophy of if you see a job that needs to be done, you do it. You step up and take your turn. That applies to civic leadership as well. You're not entitled to any office, you serve and take your turn. So – take your turn is the philosophy.

JUNGE: Did you take your turn in those organizations?

GERINGER: I did. We came back to farming in 1977. Is that when I rented my first land?

SG: I think so.

GERINGER: The local government services offices at the time; I think it was the ASCS Office – Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and then the Resource District – the Conservation District. There was a national meeting being held out in Oregon – was it in Bend? Someplace out there anyway at a college and it was a young couples, a young farming couples' national meeting and we were out of the blue nominated to blue. I said, "I'm not qualified to go out to the young farmers' thing." They said, "Well, you're farming and you're young." So, we took our young daughter Mary who was about five months old at the time-- she was the hit of the party

– we made the cover of Successful Farming Magazine. Somebody thought well enough of what we were try to do in farming as young couples making do in agriculture because so few were going into agriculture. We were oftentimes thrust into something or encouraged to do it. I joined the Farmers Union as well as the Farm Bureau not knowing anything about the politics of either. I just thought, “Whatever it takes.” I believed in cooperatives as a way to put more money in the pocket of the farmer so I got involved with the Farmers Union. I worked with the Farm Bureau because I wanted to have a certified calf program where if you could certify you had vaccinated and preconditioned your calves to where they wouldn’t lose weight upon weaning it was a marketable trait that you should be able to get something more than the person who just pulls them off the cow, sends them to sale barn the next day and they look fat but they proceed to shrink because they have not been preconditioned. I pushed the Farm Bureau to advocate for something like that. I learned the process of how you introduce a resolution at the local grassroots level, bring it up to the district level, you bring it to the state convention and you get thrashed around by everybody before you get it to work. And that was kind of a valuable lesson because one day when I don’t know which one of the farm groups decided to go to Cheyenne to visit the legislature and take interest in one of the bills that was coming up for passage. So we went to the committee hearing and watched the Ag committee at work and then went down to the floor of the house and watched the committee of the whole. I sat there and I thought, “Well, this is the same thing that we do with our meetings back home.” I’d never been part of the legislative process, never seen it work. They’re doing the same thing we do, but they get to vote.

SG: Their vote counts!

GERINGER: Their vote counts so that kind of became the thought when one of our community leaders asked if I’d consider running for the legislature.

JUNGE: Who was that?

GERINGER: Doug Bryant – Platte County legislator back in late ‘70s, early ‘80s. He said, “I’m not going to run again. I’d like to run again.” At the same time, Don Cundall, who was a state senator, had encouraged me to run. I told Doug, “You’re seated as a Democrat and I’m a Republican.” He said, “It doesn’t matter. I think you ought to to be in the legislature.”

SG: So you went to the meeting at the Brown Company.

GERINGER: The implement dealer in Wheatland was owned by Chuck Brown who is now Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the University. Chuck had a gathering spot in the implement dealership called “the loafing shed.” A loafing shed in agriculture is where the cows just kind of kick back and enjoy life. Well, that’s what the farmers would do when they’d come in and swap stories and try to extract bragging rights from each other. They had an organizing meeting one night to decide who was going to run for the two open seats because with redistricting, Platte County ended up with two seats where they had one before and they were both open. So, at the encouragement of the two people I mentioned, I showed up and several people looked around and they were kind of gauging each other as people will do when they know something is up. Finally, somebody said to me, “Well, Jim, what are you here for?” I said, “Well, I thought I might run for legislator.” They said, “Ah, you need to run for the school board, then the county commissioner

and then if things work out, run for the legislature.” I said, “No, I want to run for the legislature. I think that would be the most interesting.” They all kind of rolled their eyes and said, “That’s ok.” So I was in a four-way contested primary and then a contested general and won. I thought, “Well, won that election -- it was probably on the family name, not my own.”

JUNGE: Well, how did you campaign? You hadn’t had any experience in campaigning.

GERINGER: No, no. I think the first person was my neighbor, Bill Windmeier. I don’t remember much except that campaign it was just fascinating that you could go around and visit with all these people and tell them what could be done. I don’t even recall what platform I ran on at the time.

SG: Jim doesn’t like door-to-door and neither do I so we didn’t do much door-to-door. But the neighbor Bill Windmeier was the treasurer of his campaign and Bill said, “I’m not going to go after big donors for this campaign. I want five or ten dollars from lots of different people because when they give you their money, they’ll give you their vote.” Jim would go to whatever meetings there were around –where people were gathered. Jim has always had a way of defining an issue and presenting it and showing both sides of it and saying ‘this is where I stand on it.’ So, when people would ask him a question that’s what he would do and people liked what they heard. The other thing that we did was mail. He wrote a letter. The common wisdom is you keep it to one page but Jim didn’t. It was a two-page letter. We had volunteers set up tables at the church and we were stuffing letters and stamping them addressing them by hand because people will open an envelope that’s addressed by hand and they won’t open them necessarily during campaign season it’s got a sticker on it. Lot of volunteers and lots of personal...

GERINGER: I did a lot of things very personally.

JUNGE: Isn’t that typically Wyoming?

GERINGER: It is but we’re even drifting away from that. But Wyoming – you’re right. Bob Schuster ran and just did a media blitz out of Billings and Denver and Salt Lake and Rapid City hoping to get elected on the strength of electronic and digital media. He lost horribly to Barbara Cubin. I think that was the reason. You don’t promote your self unless you’re in person. Your best way to promote yourself, if that’s your goal, is to go out and meet people where they are.

JUNGE: When you entered the legislature, what were your expectations? Did you want to change the world, or become governor?

GERINGER: No, it was just “take your turn.” It was that same principal. If you have some knowledge or some judgment that could be helpful to making better decisions, then that’s what you brought to the table.

SG: The thing that you were interested in at first was water because it’s so important in Wyoming so you made yourself an expert in water.

GERINGER: Yes, water rights, water law. Well and George Christopolous at the time caught

wind of that early and the Board of Control and the state engineer whenever they had a bill for consideration, they always came to me. In many ways, that happens to legislators where they become known for one thing and people see the effectiveness of that and ask them to do other things. I introduced a right to farm and ranch bill, which was in essence saying, "If I've been farming outside of this community all these years – now all of the sudden development happens and they come out and try to shut my operation down, I have the right to continue farming and ranching. It took me two or three sessions before I could get that passed. The municipalities opposed it. They wanted to extend their reach far beyond their current boundaries so that they could control any future development.

JUNGE: And the water?

GERINGER: I think....I remember Ann Strand from Sweetwater County –oh, she blistered that. "There's this stinking chicken ranch out here. We gotta get rid of it!" Whatever it was that was fouling the air for her– hogs or chickens or something. "We need to get rid of that stench!" Reminds me of the time one of our neighbors called up complaining about the hog farm that was across the road from us. She was a mile away and she was complaining about the smell. She wanted me to sign a petition to shut 'em down. I said, "No, I won't do that because if you shut them down, it won't be long before you want to shut me down." Earl would always – well, not always check with us but he'd always wait for an east wind to blow because if the west wind were blowing before he spread the honey pit on the farmland then the whole town would have stunk. So we'd always either leave the farm when Earl spread the manure because you couldn't stand it –it burned your eyes and everything else!

SG: Whenever one of our children was getting married and we were having reception or dinners or whatever at the farm, we'd always be sure that we invited him and his wife so he'd know what day not to spread the honey pit!

GERINGER: He's not farming hogs anymore.

SG: No, he's not.

GERINGER: But the right to farm and ranch was, I thought was kind of a no-brainer and I found out that as high ideas that I thought agriculture had, you know the underpinnings of Wyoming society throughout every community, there were a lot of people that did not respect agriculture the way I did. I felt that agriculture was more than just a profession. It was a way of teaching conservation and respect and the work ethic to your children. Pitching in with your neighbors when they needed you. When I was growing up, one of my uncles had a heart attack right at the beginning of spring and everybody pitched in to help work the land so he could get his crops in because his family depended on the timeliness of that. Years later when I was running for office, for governor the first time, I had been raising sugar beets. It was a tough campaign because it was contested. It was contested before the Republican convention because at that time they had a straw vote. So, three weeks after I announced, I had to face a straw vote to see which candidate the party might think was most qualified or most capable of winning. I started at a distinct disadvantage because all the other opponents had started way before I did, organized committees and everything else. But I won that one and then a contested primary –four-way primary and then a contested

general against Kathy Karpan who was extremely well known. I was nowhere near as well known. So, it was a tough campaign. We put 80,000 miles just on one car plus air miles plus other vehicles that people provided. Usually you dug the beets starting the first week of October and tried to get them wrapped up. The absolute deadline was the first week of November. I knew growing up when I mentioned my uncle Dave who one of those farmers who always gets things done on time. Well, Ed Melcher in Wheatland was one of those kind of people. Good tough 'ol German stock. Absolutely great farmer. He'd come by when I was out in the field. He'd say, "Jim, you ought to get those weeds out of those beets. You ought to do the irrigating a little different way." He always had a little advice but it was always in that gruff old Deutchman way. So, one day when I was on the campaign trail, Sherri's dad was in at the Loafing Shed at the implement dealer and here comes Ed. They greeted each other so Ed says to Sherri's Dad, "Bob. When's Jim going to dig those beets?" Well, fortunately, he and I had talking about it and he said, "Well, he's going to dig some here and dig some here and over the next three weeks, he'll get 'em done before the dump closes." He was expecting the worst about you know, "Well, why can't you get this done on time?" Instead Ed said, "Well, tell him to forget it. We're going to dig 'em for him!" And Ed rounded up all the neighbors that were all raising beets. They came over and dug all my beets in one day. Now how can you beat that for Wyoming? In fact, it was even written up in AAL magazine – you know the old Aid Association for Lutherans. I got letters written from people who were saying "You know that's the way communities are. That's the way it should be."

JUNGE: Has that disappeared?

GERINGER: Perhaps somewhat because the people who are left in farming have had to expand so significantly that there are just so few farmers around. I think up in Wheatland where I think initially farms were 80 acres each, I would say that 2,000 acres is probably a productive unit now because of mechanization and technology.

JUNGE: Well, it's a monoculture too. I mean, you're raising one sort of crop?

GERINGER: Well, you're still rotating crops because the rotation is important for soil till as well as the mineral figure of the soil. But the absence of labor -- there just isn't any inexpensive labor anymore. The hand labor that used to go into raising beets for instance like when Dad came over was incredibly labor intensive. Today almost everything to do with raising beets is automated, mechanized from the coating to precision planting. You never have to thin. You use herbicides in a selective way -- even crops today that are Round-Up ready where the corn for instance or soybeans in the Midwest have been genetically cultured to where they are resistant to Round Up which typically is a chemical that will kill any growing thing so you can spray that on and it kills everything except the corn. You don't need extensive labor to do cultivation. You have less soil erosion that way, minimum till. There are a lot of advantages in addition to the fact that you don't have to pay for as much labor. It's more expensive -- the seed is patented now. You can't hold seed over and raise your own from the same seed-- it's a violation of patent law. So, it's more expensive. The chemicals are far more expensive. The herbicides themselves would have cost \$500 a pint -- why you put on an ounce per acre, you'd better be sure of your blending. That's one of the things that I did when I was farming. Not only tried to understand more about -- to me, the way you made your money was in how much you produced it's how you marketed it and how you control your expenses going into it. You weren't there in the bragging rights for the tonnage; you

were there for the bottom line on the ledger. But, I got to thinking about how do I know what application I'm putting on of a fairly expensive herbicide. I need to calculate the groundspeed. I need to have precise swaths down the field. I don't want to do overlap, but I don't want under lap. Is there a better way to do this? So, I experimented with that. Now today of course with GPS equipment and site-specific farming, I was doing all these things by hand and by calculation before all the technology was available for the same reason – to control the amount of chemical. The last year I raised sugar beets – I guess it was the second to the last year – I'd done soil samples at various levels in the soil because a sugar beet will go down about three or four or five feet – late in the fall. Where most farmers were putting on about 200 pounds per acres of nitrogen, I did my soil sample and I thought, "There's plenty of nitrate left in the soil at these different regions, I should be able to raise a good crop with a minimum -- I'll put on a starter fertilizer" which was a combination of nitrate and phosphate – put on a total of 20 pounds per acre of nitrate. At the end of the year, I went over to see Rod Fullmer, who was the head of the sugar beet factory in Torrington at the time, because I was member of the Torrington Rotary Club as at the time as a legislator because I represented parts of both Goshen and Platte as a legislator, state senator. I said, "Out of curiosity Rod, who was the top beet farmer this year?" He said, "I don't know. Let's go look." So we went over the factory and he pulls out his sheet and he says, "Well, your name's at the top." I said, "Well, who was the top grower?" "You!" I said, "Really? How does that happen?" I always thought it was by tonnage. He said it's a combination of tonnage, sugar content, tear – the part of the beet that's delivered that not useable in quality. Tonnage and sugar content were the two highest rated factors. The other two were also rated in there. I had probably the greatest economic yield in addition to the greatest useable product.

JUNGE: How did you figure 20 versus 200?

GERINGER: I calculated what the soil content had and what the needs of the beet were?

JUNGE: But how do you determine what the soil content is? By taking it to a lab or something?

GERINGER: Yes, you take soil samples -- you core at different levels in the soil and you document the location in the field and I marked it on a little hand sketch where today I could just use my GPS – I did a hand sketch so I knew the differences in the soil within the field as well as the entire field and sent the soil samples in for testing. Documented that and then as best I could I varied the rate of application by the flow meters in this case the planter. This was a liquid chemical as a starter fertilizer. I did not use anhydrous on the beets, I used it on corn.

JUNGE: Was it injected though?

GERINGER: No, you have kind of a volumetric pump that you calibrate as these rollers come by and expel liquid-to-liquid fertilizer mixture of phosphate and nitrate. You control the amount of that going out and it drips into an area just adjacent to the seed. So you make your seed furrow and the seeds are plopped in to that. There's an offset disk about an inch, maybe two inches and the starter fertilizer is there so as the seed germinates and roots spread out – they spread outward first and then downward. They will pick up that starter fertilizer and it invigorates them so they start to penetrate more quickly and develop more leaf vigor and in that process get a head start on not only the growing season but pest resistance too.

JUNGE: Are you saying that your background in engineering allowed you to rationalize the farming?

GERINGER: I'd say that the process of thinking through...not just engineering, per say. I've grumbled many a time that the engineers who design equipment should have to maintain it for a year just to see how a lousy job they did at designing it. So, Sherri's Dad was especially helpful there – we'd modify things just to see if there's a better way to do this. Let's take it a part and put back together the way it should have been.

JUNGE: Really? Your dad was that way?

SG: Yeah, yeah. He was a civil engineer by training but he was a very hands-on person.

GERINGER: He was a plant engineer for Ford Motor Company in Missouri. Spent thirty years with Ford Motor so he did a lot of civil engineering but he also had to supervise a lot of the equipment that was there so he had a very keen mechanical sense and when he retired he said, "I'll come out and help you with farming, but don't ever ask me to make a decision."

SG: He had plenty of advice though?

GERINGER: He had ways of getting the decision!

JUNGE: I have to ask you this now because it's so appropriate. Do you think it's training in engineering that allows you to be so organized and deliberate about what you do – all your life?

GERINGER: I'd say what it does is it helps you step back and not be panicked by the moment. "How can I solve this problem?" Figure it out. Instead of being intimidated by a difficulty, you try to determine what you can affect and what you can't. Well, in the case of equipment, let's take it apart if need be or let's change how it's done.

SG: I don't know that it's the training or the engineering. He's a logical thinker to start with. That way of looking at things then led him to the career choice of engineering which helped train to do things that had he been an English major, he wouldn't know how to do but he still would have been a logical thinker?

JUNGE: Going one step beyond that – was that genetic, environmental or the way your parents raised you? Or, is a combination of genetics and environment?

GERINGER: Well, that's hard to answer because I don't think we fully understand genetics. If you come from good stock, you ought to be good stock!

JUNGE: Just like a heifer, right?

GERINGER: I was no heifer!

JUNGER: All right, a bull!

GERINGER: Just don't call me a steer!

JUNGE: All right—Bull! I don't know farming!!

GERINGER: All a steer can do is try!

SG: Oh, gee! Jim's dad, as Jim mentioned, he always got used equipment and made do with what he had and so from the time Jim was little he was out tinkering on equipment and learned how to think through what needs to be done next.

GERINGER: Dad always figured "two days in the field and one day in the yard." Sometimes, two days in the yard and one day in the field "fixin" because there was no money to buy new equipment. He went to auctions and he'd try to ..Ausmith and Ryshecky?? the auctioneers, good Germans quit farming and became auctioneers.

JUNGE: Who are the guys that own it in Torrington?

SG: The Madden Brothers.

GERINGER: Ausmith and Ryshecky were both Torrington and Scottsbluff. But the early part of every auction, they'd drag everything out of the shops and the barn. They knew the auction was going to get behind before they got to the real money maker – you know the big equipment and at times they'd say, "I'm going to sell from here to here. What am I bidding?" Dad would say, "Fifty cents!" "Sold!" So that became a treasure trove of nuts and bolts and miscellaneous hardware. A lot of times it was my job... Dad would say, "Go find me a three-quarter nut." I'd have to go into the tool shop and thrash through all these things. I'd find what he needed and I got pretty good at spotting dimension bolts and nuts because I had to look so hard and long.

JUNGE: Did you have a part in that? Because sometimes you'd have to tell Sherri, right, go get me a such-and-such and you'd have to know what that is?

GERINGER: Yes, or I'd just call 'em and tell 'em "Sherri's going to come by and pick it up. It wasn't like Flo in the farming magazine where he just sends her into town with no clue what to buy.

JUNGE: Still, I'm interested in this genetic thing. Your dad said this is the way we have to do things and you pick up a practical training....

GERINGER: I don't know if that's genetic or by emulating.

SG: I think it was an environment thing....

GERINGER: It's probably genetics in that there's some inherent skills passed on through genetics... intellect or whatever. Dad... Well, I don't know how to evaluate it.

JUNGE: Is it a reoccurring trait within the family besides yourself?

GERINGER: Every one of our kids is different so it's hard to even say how it carries on. For instance, when I enrolled in engineering at Kansas State I was automatically put in remedial English class because they had determined that people who come into engineering courses are deficient in English. So where everybody signed up for three days a week, one hour each, all of us who took engineering had to go five days a week. I was the only one of my class that aced the class. So, genetically I had something more than just logic. I had both left-brain and right brain at least part of the time. I still drive Sherri crazy with all my logic.

SG: And I drive him crazy with my lack of logic.

JUNGE: So, you complemented each other.

SG: Yes! But there are times when I'm logical and times when he's not! Our kids would go to him for help with math or English but they'd come to me for help with English and not even bother about the math.

JUNGE: This explains a lot about how you handled the governorship. You saw a problem and you are a problem-solver!

GERINGER: I considered myself first and foremost a resource provider. If somebody else could solve the problem it as my job to find the resources and the means to get it done. I had a role as and advocate and a role as a visionary. That 's part of the job that you have as governor – to lay out a vision for what are the things that could make it a better place. But there were so many things that go on that other people might share both in that vision or have a different way to go and if it was the right thing, somehow, then my first job was to help them get the job done. It didn't matter who got the credit. There's always a need when you're in political office – at least a perceived need – that you have to take credit as much as possible. That becomes quite a temptation. People who become what they think they should be over time are probably not fit to hold office. They become accustomed to the perks and the attention they receive. From the very beginning, I said I am not going to yield to that. It's the office they respect; I am just the current occupant of the office. Whatever might be attributed to me is fine, but my obligation is to uphold the respect for the office.

JUNGE: Jim, I think that's noble and valuable but that's not how it actually works a lot of times right?

GERINGER: No, but I put up with a lot of it!

JUNGE: But the good ol' boy system sort of flies in the face of the engineer's logic....

SG: But you said yourself that Jim actually offended the "good ol' boy" system when he came into office.

JUNGE: I said that?

SG: You did! Listen to your tapes.

GERINGER: During my time in office, I believed in a lot of openness and I put things on display that had never been displayed, you might say, as before as far as scrutiny by the public. Some of the local media in particular thought that I was doing it for the very first time and took umbrage and laid on the criticism and I said, "Look, I'm just showing you what's always gone on and how we're going to change it" Instead, it was turned as I'm trying to manipulate the system. For instance, when judgeships came up I thought there are some really qualified people applying for this -- I ought to at least let the people know here are the three people applying for a judgeship. People are appointed for quite a long time when they're a judge. Let's have some sort of public vetting. Since the governor gets to choose based on the recommendation of the judicial nominating commission, let the people know. Well, I really got a really strong pushback on that especially from the Bar -- Bar Association. "Well, it's going to hurt our reputations, if I'm not picked." I said, "Well, it's going to hurt the State of Wyoming if I pick the wrong one. Who's more important here?"

SG: The other thing is did was guarantee that they would give you three qualified candidates instead of one qualified and two ringers.

GERINGER: I didn't find out until later--- Stan Hathaway told me, "You wouldn't believe how they used to jerk my chain. They'd send me two real dogs and one that they wanted that I didn't want and I'd have to appoint the one that I didn't want just because he was the only one qualified." I thought, "Wow! I kind of stumbled into this one but for the right reasons. So, that's the kind of thing that I felt ought to be available to the public. When I was legislator, I went to all the communities and any gathering for anything where people would say," "What's going to go on in the legislature?" I'd say, "Well, this is what's going to go on as best we know it today. Here are the bills." They'd ask questions about the law and I'd try and look up the law. I'd brought some of the statute books with me where today you could look it up on the computer. I did a daily radio wrap-up for my district you might say...usually about 7:30 in the morning.

SG: He was very well known for doing that. People would tune in to the radio so they would know whether.... and he didn't tell them 'this is how I'm going to vote or this is what you should think about it,' he'd say, "this is the bill and this is what it means.'

JUNGE: But in your opinion, this is what it means?

GERINGER: No, I'd say this is what the bill is....yeah, I probably gave, in summary an assessment that would reflect somewhat my opinion. But what I was after was let them be informed and if they had an opinion, they could let me know to form my final judgment. I wasn't going to predetermine their approach to a bill or an issue.

JUNGE: Well, I would expect -- not your opinion -- but the way you laid it out to your constituents would be an engineer's logical approach. In other words, this is what I perceive to be

objectively.....

GERINGER: That might be logic. To me it was just a matter of you read the bill, what's it going to do? Well, it's going to do this. There is no other conclusion you could draw. It's not a judgmental thing. Now should you do this – yes or no?

JUNGE: But you could say – the upshot of this particular bill...this bill has some negative ramifications should it be passed and you could add that to it. Did you ever do that?

GERINGER: Probably, typically, I would say what the bill would do. I didn't way it was whether positive or negative. When the legislature finally implemented a 1-800 number where people could call in, that was a big step. My first few years in the legislature I was struck by the fact of how many people were left out of the decision making process. Neil Stafford was probably one of the best senate presidents in saying, "This is the way it's going to go." You could have a bill pass through the house with flying colors, it'd get over the senate, pass committee, pass committee of the whole, or go to the second reading, come up third reading and (thwack!) it was dead! Just that fast! And one day I happened to happened to be watching and a bill came up for final vote and somebody kind of nodded at Mr. President and he went like that and bill sure enough didn't go down.

JUNGE: He gave the negative sign and that was it?

GERINGER: That was it. That was one example. I'm sure there were others. There were a lot of deals that were made behind the scene because that was the history of the legislature.

JUNGE: Which wouldn't sit well with you and your mentality?

GERINGER: No, because I always felt like, "Why don't we make a decision together? I learned early on that I couldn't just trust my own judgment. Somebody else could contribute. Either test my persuasion or change my outlook. Both were important.

JUNGE: This is really important about your approach. My understanding of Ed Herschler was that he knew how to pull the right lapels. Having working in the legislature as you did for all those years and he knew who he count on and he could assuage bad feelings and he could encourage this – in other words, he could play politics in the traditional sense of the term.

GERINGER: Oh, he did. He did.

JUNGE: I take it this is not the way you would approach things.

GERINGER: I don't believe in manipulation. I absolutely don't believe in it. I don't like the current president's approach because it's manipulative. It's not his party, it's his methodology. By manipulation I mean where you induce people to do something in a way that would be not just based on your individual assessments and you test right and wrong. I'm sure people could argue and say "then, you're not a visionary. If you don't absolutely drive toward your goal then you're not achieving your vision." Your vision is not perfect – never will be. There will always be an end

point you that you might desire but how you get there, even getting there can be up for question. Why not let that be tested among a variety of debate? When I became governor, I felt there was a necessity to let the legislature work its wisdom. I had the final choice. Obviously, I could go advocate one way or the other and if people misunderstood why I had proposed a certain piece of legislation or would be supportive or not supportive people on my staff would go say, "here's what the Governor thinks." Where Ed Herschler would jerk a chain and get you down to his office and say...well, I won't say in specific terms but in outlook he made it clear that it would not be desirable to vote the way you were voting. So, he was very good about having final say with his own party, let's put it that way.

JUNGE: Well, you had friends though you could depend on right?

GERINGER: Yeah, in terms of politics. The Senate had 23 Republicans and the House had 43 Republicans so in terms of a majority, it was more than two to one. Let's say 23 Senate Republicans – I could count on 15 most of the time and 7 all of the time. In other words, I had to build coalitions. And, I always worked across the aisle -- both as a legislator and certainly as governor. I always met with individual caucuses before the legislature started. I met weekly with the leadership of both the majority and minority party. Even when the minority party knew that we were going to disagree, if they needed something to help their cause just to get the word out, I would help them. The idea needs to be decided upon by its merits, not on how you manipulate somebody's outcome or outlook. Let's get the merits on the table and then we'll decide.

JUNGE: Do you think you would have had a harder time if you would have had a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House?

GERINGER: I don't know. Frankly in Wyoming, people are much more likely to be their own individual than they are of a party ilk. People are less conservative but there are darn few liberals in Wyoming so in that regard I don't know that a political label makes a whole lot of difference.

SG: There were a lot of times, people would say to me, "You know, I don't always agree with what Jim's doing, but I know he's thought it through." And I'd tell 'em, "Hey, I'm married to him and I don't always agree with what he's doing." But it was true. He was respected for his thoughtfulness and his intellect as much as for the position that he held.

GERINGER: I went to a party caucus one time in the House early on. I have no idea what the bill was. At the end of the thing, whoever was leading the caucus said, "Now do we have the votes going down to the floor?" I offered, I said, "Well, I see your point right now, but if during debate down on the floor I change my mind, I'll change my mind." Didn't realize that was an athema???? And I stuck to it. If somebody will persuade me in open debate with the best of information they can bring forward, I'll change my mind.

JUNGE: Which leaves you open for the accusation of being a traitor to the agreement or not abiding by the agreement right?

GERINGER: Well, I did not agree. I said, "I agreed to this point. I have not given my word on how I will vote because if I have to commit yea or nay based on partisan politics then I have

abdicated my elected office. I wasn't elected..." And of course the argument is the majority needs to work its will so that government can function. It can't be so indecisive but in Wyoming in particular. Again, I go by the principal that my judgment is not absolute. Someone else can have a greater understanding or grasp that I ought to consider before I make my final choice.

JUNGE : Let's see—you were chairman of what committees in the House and the Senate?

GERINGER: I didn't chair any in the House. In the Senate, I chaired Judiciary, Appropriations, Management, Audit.

JUNGE: Which are three really key! Did you seek those out or like the rest of your life, did you just evolve to those positions or did you say, "This is something I think would be useful?"

GERINGER: I enjoyed the Appropriations Committee and I requested that early on in the House because you get the big picture. I always wanted to see things in context. Nothing happens independently of everything else where this committee would just look at this bill and they wouldn't be aware of everything else. In particular, people who had come down with a very parochial bill – what I'm going to do for my district and for my county –as soon as they had served on Appropriations and they saw the relative needs in terms of priority, not just political persuasion—they'd say, "you know, there's more to the story. We've got to say no here so we can say yes here." Where the individual legislator would say "It's either yes or no on my town and I need it for my town!" So, I wanted to be on Appropriations just to get the broader picture. So, after six years in the House I ready to run again and who was it who called me? Was it Don? I guess it was Don Cundall who called me and said, "I'm not going to run for the Senate. Why don't you run for my seat?" No, it was Tom Strook. Tom was recruiting people for the Senate.

SG: Oh, that's right.

GERINGER: He said, "Why don't you run for the Senate? Don's going to be stepping down." I said, "No, I don't think so." "Well, why not?" "Well, I kind of enjoy the House. The House is so much more open and engaged in debate. The Senate is just kind of quiet. Just two different cultures. Parenthetically, I've noted since then they've even done little vignettes in class in junior high where you have a larger group and a smaller group half the size debate things and the smaller group is always more to the point, more efficient in their debate, more quick to act. The other ones are always more gregarious, more opinionated --the House and the Senate. It has to do with numbers as well as personalities. Anyway, I told Tom I didn't want to run. He said, "Well, let me ask you. If you were to come to the Senate, what would change your mind? Why do you want to stay in the House?" I said it was because I wanted to stay on Appropriations. He said, "Why do you want to be on Appropriations?" I said, "Because you get the big picture!" "Well, if you could be on the Appropriations Committee in the Senate, would you run?" Well, I knew there was fat chance of that – there was only three from the majority and two in the minority party so -- three slots – no way!" He said, "Would you run for Senate if you could be on Appropriations?" I said, "Yeah." Tom hung up and about an hour later Russ Zimmer called up and said, "Jim. Why don't you run for the Senate?" I said, "No Russ. I don't think so." He said, "Well, if you could be on Appropriations, would you run?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Ok, you got it!"

JUNGE: That's funny.

GERINGER: So, I ran and I ran against Ed Kendig who was my banker. Ed had been in the Senate years before when there was evenly divided Republicans and Democrats – 15 each. Ed had split duties because half the session was a Republican president and half was a Democrat. Ed had served in that position so he was extraordinarily well known and well respected and I thought, "What am I doing." I won by 60%.

JUNGE: And eventually became chairman?

GERINGER: Of the Appropriations committee, yeah. Started out in the last seat, moved up to the second seat when Kelly Mader was chair. Then ended up being chair and then ran afoul of the party leadership and they kicked me off of the chairmanship. Then decided that one of the toughest committees in the legislature, both in terms of volume as well as issues, is Judiciary. More bills than any other committee and really tough bills for whatever reason and I chaired that committee for my last two years in the Senate.

PODCAST 4

JUNGE: Did it work the same way in your running for the governorship? Did somebody come to you and say, "Jim, I think you ought to run for governor."

GERINGER: Yes. I don't know who all.

SG: It was different. It wasn't someone that was in a position to make something happen. There were individuals who said, "With your leadership capabilities, you need to be in the governor's office." So it wasn't any movers and shakers.

GERINGER: I can point to a couple. People in our hometown of course. Bill. Nedalyn. Nedalyn Testolin, who was very involved in education. Nedalyn -- the Thirty-One-Bar Ranch up in Wheatland. Extremely involved and very capable in leading education in the state.

SG: One of the issues was who could run a statewide campaign for him because he didn't have statewide name recognition and the right person appeared and said, "I will..."
Go ahead...it's your story.

GERINGER: I don't know which things came in sequence. At one point, I was mulling over...It had been kind of a difficult series of four years in the Senate because I could see a train wreck coming. I made it clear to the legislators that first of all; across the board cuts were a smelly way to conduct business in the state. That showed a lack of setting priorities and funding the right things. While across the board cuts don't attract concentrated opposition, if you single people out, those who are not being cut as much or not being cut at all are just going to sit back and not do anything...the ones who are cut get the most attention.

JUNGE: Geological museum as an example.

GERINGER: Something like that is the Washington Monument syndrome which is to say or to propose something so preposterous like “if you cut our budget one more time, we’ll have to delete the Washington Monument.” So you do things like that to say this is how extreme things are. In essence, it’s a political move. So things like – you have to set priorities -- we should do a better job of doing it. You’re not paying attention to health and social services or education – the three biggest areas in your budget. I was the first to point out that income earned on investments was the second largest source of income to the state and yet the legislature with its so-called link-deposits and farm loans and everything else, it was frittering away all kinds of investment opportunity giving low-interest or no-interest loans to people out of our permanent funds as well as other discretionary funds loaning money at such discounted rates that it was hurting the general fund at a time when all of these other programs were in dire need. So, I said, “here’s a process....” And I drafted a first law that set up a cabinet form of government for the State. Turned out I was the first one to implement it because while Mike Sullivan appointed people to that position, he really didn’t use the cabinet as a form of governing. I wrote the performance measurement statutes that were one of the first of their kinds so we that would evaluate given goals of any department –how well they had achieved those goals in terms of service to the public.

JUNGE: Is that what you call strategic planning?

GERINGER: Strategic planning. Performance-based budgeting. Strategic planning/performance-based budgeting were a combination. The state had not done that. It was always. “What did you do before? What do you want to do this year? What in addition?” So, it was always perpetuating what had existed rather than prioritizing what could be. So one year when we knew it was going to be a really tough session because of the budget, I had prepared a series of slides to be projected onto a projector so that the Senate could digest in very quick fashion with visual information what kind of circumstance we were in, what we needed to do and what elements of the budget were the hardest to deal with and yet the largest cost. I pointed out to them if you took into account education, health, family services and public safety; you essentially had 92% of the total general fund. Yet they kept talking about we’re “going to cut the fat out of government.” I said, “If you eliminated the legislature, the judiciary, the Governor’s office, the state engineer, DEQ – environmental quality,”...enumerated all these miscellaneous departments if you will, I said, ‘You might save 5% of the budget, at best. You have to set priorities!’ When I was getting ready to give this presentation, the leadership literally pulled the plug. They wouldn’t let me give it. From that point on, I explained everything in the budget but everything that was cut was cut arbitrarily and I protested that to the point of when it came time to do conference committees between the House and the Senate, normally the chair of the committee would chair the committee for that house or that body/ I was not even allowed to chair the conference committees.

JUNGE: When was that?

GERINGER: It was ’92. That was an extremely tough session. In the following two years, I ended up being chair of the Judiciary when I was removed from my seat on Appropriations.

JUNGE: What was the main reason for the opposition?

GERINGER: The rationale that was given to me by Jerry Dixon and Deemer True, among others, was that if the public knows for sure the circumstances of the budget and what we would have to do to make it right, they would insist on a tax increase and we don't want a tax increase. I said, "I don't buy that. People will make tough choices if they have to if they feel that there's good leadership." They said, "Well, we have to make these decisions as best we can among ourselves because only we should know how bad things are." I said, "A bad decision made in open discussion is better than a good decision made behind closed doors." They didn't buy it. I singled out two people but they weren't the only ones. It was a very difficult time and at the end of two more years of that I said, "I think I've taken my turn. I've given it my best shot." "Well, why don't you run for some other office?" Well, if I do, it'd just be the state treasurer so I just kind of threw that comment out casually. One day, I was sitting back home I get a phone call. I don't remember when it was but it was after the legislative session. See prior to the legislative session, the Wyoming Heritage...the Wyoming Business Alliance as they call it now – has its annual meeting in November and it's the biggest gathering of Wyoming people anywhere. People schedule all kinds of meetings around that gathering because it's a substantive issue. All the people are there. It's gearing up for the legislature. It's usually at a time during an election year when the legislative body elects its respective leaders so it's always a big gathering. So at least one person announced that they were going to run for governor. And then ahead of the session, another one did. And, I was getting quite a bit of discussion about running for office...

SG: You were waiting for Malcolm...

GERINGER: I was waiting for Malcolm Wallop to decide because Malcolm had indicated he might want to run for governor and I said I would respect what he wants to do. I'm not going to step out in front of that. Besides, none of us who were in the legislature at the time – there were three who ended up in a four-way contested primary...three were in the legislature.

JUNGE: Who were they?

GERINGER: John Perry, Charlie Scott and myself. I said no one should announce during the legislative session because then everything you do could be implied to be self-serving. What can you do to gain attention? People shouldn't announce ahead of the session. Well, Malcolm finally decided that he was not going to run and I don't recall when I got the call but I answered the phone one day and a voice says, "Jim?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "This is Eddie Moore." Eddie Moore had been president of the senate and he was a stalwart for the party and well as helped a lot with recruiting people to run for office. He says, "I hear you're thinking about running for state treasurer." I said, "Well, Eddie, I kind of thought about it." He says, "Well, don't!" I was kind of shocked by that. I thought, "Sure, why not?" I'll step aside. Sure. Why not? He said, "Run for governor!" Well, ok. That's kind of encouraging. So, that one comes to mind. At the end of the session, I can't think of who it was that came into visit with me one day. Ohh...I think it was Eli because Eli was thinking about running for governor then too.

SG: He did second term.

GERINGER: No, I think it was first term. I'm almost sure it was. The story is -- Eli wanted to meet with me and it was in the judiciary committee room so I know it was when I was still chairing

judiciary. We sat down and he says, "Who is going to run for governor? Are you going to run?" I said, "I haven't decided yet." He said, "Well, I sat down with Steve Freudenthal and they mapped out all the numbers of how you could win governorship of Wyoming and I can beat any candidate but you." I said, "Really." He said, "Well, that's the way Steve figured it out." I have no idea what they did but Steve was very good at counting numbers. He was a very good strategist politically. Before or after that, someone came in who was going to run for office who had tried to recruit Mary Kay Hill as a campaign manager and Mary Kay said, "No, I'm going to wait and see if Jim runs for governor." She didn't me that but she told this individual. I don't remember who it was, might have been Larry Wolfe. One day Mary Kay dropped by and said, "Are you going to run? If you do, I'll be your campaign manager." She was the best in our available in our estimation. It's kind of the way that things evolved. I obviously had some ideas of what could be better. Sherri's Dad said, "Why do you want to run for governor? This is the worst budget anybody could ever ask for. You're in for a lot of criticism."

JUNGE: Wasn't it on the upswing though?

GERINGER: Nope. Six solid years of desperation.

JUNGE: From what to what? What year to what year?

GERINGER: 1995 TO 2000.

JUNGE: But I thought that things were on the upswing nationally before the dot.com bust.

GERINGER: Well, they were but not in Wyoming.

SG: Wyoming typically trails the national economy.

GERINGER: Boom and bust.

SG: Right. Both ways.

JUNGE: When you're talking Jim, it sounds to me like your attempts to be democratic and attempts to involve people who have various types of expertise. Your attempts to be logical about how you approach a problem. Those things just swam upstream against what amounts to politics.

GERINGER: Politics and political expediency. To me, the best form of governing is when people feel that they've done it themselves. They will always give credit to a leader who has enabled them. But, it's a different type of credit. It's a credit of "you brought out the best in me" rather than "I have to give credit to you." There's such a temptation when you hold a high office that you deserve it. But you don't. You just hold it.

JUNGE: I always thought – I'll inject my personal feeling. I always thought a person should never run for office. If this was the best of all possible worlds, a person should be drafted.

GERINGER: You should be thrust into public service, not expect it.

JUNGE: Somebody should come along and say Jim, like they did, and say, “Jim, we want you. We think you can do the best job.”

GERINGER: Obviously any person because of human nature is flattered by that. I was but it was a reinforcement of my own view that I think could do the job. So, you have to step back and say, “am I really that idealistic?” No. It’s easy to fall for a little bit of praise.

JUNGE: Well, that reflects your German/Lutheran background too that you should never allow vanity into your life to the point that it spoils you as a God-fearing person. Besides that, it seems to me like there’s always somebody who’s a little bit better and knows a little bit better than you.

GERINGER: Well, I knew my imperfections all along. I just didn’t want to always read about them in the paper!

JUNGE: You mentioned the other day, pillow talk was how you.....I said you were the power behind the throne. You said, “I wouldn’t call it that.” You said it’s more like “pillow talk”...just as a wrap up..was that true, Sherri?

SG: By saying “pillow talk” what I meant was those private conversations that we can have – just the two of us. Which we have always had. No, there’s not a power behind the throne. Jim and I have been partners in our marriage but HE was the governor. Yeah, he uses me as a sounding board but when he was governor, he had lots of people advising him. He didn’t need an advisor, he needed a wife!

GERINGER: Somebody who had a little better judgment. There’s just so many ways where that’s a way to help think through an issue.

JUNGE: Did you ever ask her for her advice on a political issue?

GERINGER: Oh, I’m sure I did but it probably happened so routinely I don’t know I would single out anything.

JUNGE: If you’re like my wife and I, you might drift into a conversation and say “I don’t think I’d go along with this” and then you wait for a response.

GERINGER: Hmm. Well, again it was just a matter of if we talked about something I’d say, “Well, here’s what’s on my mind.” Many times Sherri would listen and offer an insight that I hadn’t even considered and always set my mind at ease on a decision I’d already made or it would cause me to rethink it again. And there were issues that Sherri carried that were ahead of their time. She helped carry a bill to the legislature that failed initially to have insurance pay for preventive measures. You know, screenings and preventive measures because the best way to reduce healthcare cost as improve health is through prevention and early intervention. It’s not paid for – it wasn’t at that time paid for in most insurance policies. She took terrible criticism. Now, it’s routine. She got the bill passed.

JUNGE: She got the bill passed! That's great!

SG: I didn't have a vote. I didn't pass it.

JUNGE: You had influence. You didn't unduly exercise that influence it!

GERINGER: We've run into couples where ---well, anonymously -- the lady or the spouse, we'll put it that way -- is so intent on her husband holding a position that she goes to extremes to make that happen -- political manipulation as well as fund raising, or influence peddling, whatever you want to call it. We've encountered that many times. Sherri's not that kind of person.

JUNGE: Remember Claire Axtell from Thermopolis?

GERINGER: No. The name rings a bell but I don't recall her.

JUNGE: The Axtells were very prominent in the Republican politics and she was really old when I interviewed her. This was way before your time. But she actually met William Jennings Bryan who ran for president in 1896. She actually met him. When I interview here at the Pioneer Home, she was 102. She laughed and said one time there was a candidate who came to the Pioneer Home and was talking and she said something negative about the speaker and the woman next to her said, "Well, you don't know him. That's my husband." She (Axtell) said, "Well, I don't care. I don't agree with him and I'm not going to vote for him."

SG: I'd get that occasionally. Some people are very opinionated and that's their right to be. They don't want to hear another view. Ok, fine. If they don't agree, ok fine. That's your right. This is a democracy.

JUNGE: And this is a democracy so how do you prefer to wrap this up on Friday?

GERINGER: Well, I'll give you one more vignette from the Legislature. I was in the House and there was a very difficult budget negotiation going on between the House and the Senate. There were times both as a legislator and as governor when the House and the Senate absolutely could not stand each other. They just fought. The Senate even adjourned one day and didn't even tell the House. But there was a budget reconciliation going on between committees -- I think that was the guns versus God one. One house had proposed buying more land at Camp Guernsey for the guard to train on -- both our own guard as well as other states' training. I think it was the House then had proposed a chaplain for the State Training School up in Lander. Those were symbolic of the differences between the House and the Senate so it became know as the guns versus God bill or amendments if you will. Well, it wasn't going anywhere and Tom Strook was chair of the Senate Appropriations at the time and he was kind of holding the line because he wanted to hold out more for the Senate position and was using that as a bargaining chip where he knew the House wouldn't yield on the chaplaincy while he could hold out for other things. Eddie Moore was president of the Senate at the time. Eddie said, "You know we gotta settle this some time." So, Eddie and...I can't remember who was Speaker of the House at the time....I'll have to look. Eddie put together, with some help a committee who were going to wrangle out a deal and I was one of those members and we got it all worked out one evening when everybody had gone out to dinner trying to wrap up the

legislative session. So we're sitting in Eddie's office and we were all kind of relieved, we finally got this done. All of the sudden, Eddie's door goes, "BLAM!" And it was Tom Strook. Tom always had a drink or two or more when he had gone out to dinner. He had this great big cigar in his mouth and he said, "What the hell is going on in here?" So, the whole thing unraveled because Tom ran that committee and Eddie was not going to tell him what to do didn't matter what we'd put together. But, cooler heads prevailed finally and we got the bill passed. But, that just another insight into how legislative bodies by and large worked in the past where one or two very powerful people could control the outcome of an entire process.

JUNGE: Why didn't Strook run for governor?

GERINGER: He wanted to. He couldn't even be president of the Senate. His colleagues wouldn't get let him get past vice-president

JUNGE: Why, because he was so strong-minded?

GERINGER: I think at the time the leadership thought he was too liberal. I have no idea. That's the only thing I could surmise but I was told more than once that Tom will never be president because his peers will not elect him. That's my hearsay!

SG: But he was happy being ambassador.

GERINGER: He did a very good job.

JUNGE: What was he ambassador to?

GERINGER: Guatemala.

JUNGE: Guatemala.

GERINGER: He and George Herbert Walker Bush were classmates.

JUNGE: Did you ever want to be president?

GERINGER: No, I didn't want to be governor...until I was then I wanted to be.

JUNGE: You don't want to be First Lady?

SG: I already was! Once was enough.

GERINGER: (On being Governor) Overall, the experience has been incredibly rewarding and insightful. All along the way, there have been difficult decisions, especially when you stick to your principals. But, if people don't set an example for others in difficult times, then there will be a constant acquiescence of "well, lets just go along" rather than "let's do the right thing."

SG: We've always felt like we're being prepared for the next step. Whatever we're doing now is

providing a foundation for the next place that we're going to be doing whatever.

GERINGER: Whatever we're called to do.

SG: Yes. It's been kind of exciting because we'll say to each other, "Well, I don't know where this is going to lead but you know, we're along for the ride."

JUNGE: Well, you don't but don't you feel like you're kind of in a transitional mode right now?

GERINGER: Absolutely. We had no idea we'd buy this house. What do we need this house for? What's going to happen next? There must be something happening. And, maybe nothing will but it's been great so far.

Transcript 3

JUNGE: Here, let me get this going (microphone) Sanford had a lot of support from Republic leaders. He was supposed to be an up and coming star. The sexual desire in men is so powerful and I think it was even a little more than that in his case. I think it was mid-life crisis time.

GERINGER: I'm not even going to try to second guess although I was visiting with Governor Schweitzer up in Montana yesterday. His registration is Democrat and he said, "Well, Mark and I had a lot in common. We're both Libertarians. I'm a Democrat and he's a Republican, but frankly, we're both Libertarians." He went on to talk about that. He admired him a lot too up until this revelation. My observation was you look at the whole string of governors, mayors, whoever, members of Congress who have all been well.... indiscrete would be much too mild. I think my term is "you just can't fix stupid and that was stupid. People who assume positions of leadership--if they're not anchored in the real world become carried away. I recall the comment made by President Clinton at the time as to why he got involved with Monica Lewinsky and did some of the things he did -- he said, "because I could." And I guess the presumption is "because I can get away with it." I guess when you're in Argentina, you assume no one will know who you are. So, who knows why Sanford did what he did or why Governor Roy Romer had a mistress for 18 years before he confessed on television and dragged his wife up to the microphone with him. I thought that was as harsh and cruel as anything you could ever do. Whether it be him or the governor of New York or the governor of New Jersey -- you look at the whole range of them -- they degrade the institution -- the institutions of how we govern. Nobody expects a leader to be perfect but there is a threshold of behavior that the public expects and should expect. Our form of governing is often called a democracy but in the sense of a republic where you would elect those who most represent your views -- that's what we are. So if we indeed elect those who most reflect our own views, that includes our values so expect people to behave at least as though they have some minimum standard of having ethics and values in office and that's what's missing in the most recent revelation about Governor Sanford.

JUNGE: Do you think that most people are like him?

GERINGER: Most governors you mean?

JUNGE: No, just most people. At one point in their life, they'll have some indiscretions and that if they can get away with something, they will.

GERINGER: I don't know. The congressman from Oklahoma, what was his name that said something to the effect of "Doing the right thing when no one is looking." That takes self-discipline. Everybody's capable of indiscretion as well as self-discipline and thank goodness most of our leaders exercise the self-discipline because nobody's immune to it.

JUNGE: Sherri, do you have anything to add on that?

SG: Well, maybe I'm too much of an idealist but I would say that most people do not take the opportunities that are offered them just indiscriminately like that. I think that most people have enough character, enough value and enough self-respect that they will say, "wait a minute, that's not right and I'm not going to do that." I may be a little idealistic. I just don't think the majority of people do stray like that.

GERINGER: Another thing is young people in particular and peers look to role models. I can't tell you how many times in the legislature people would look to a person whose judgment they valued when they weren't quite sure how I should vote on this bill. So whether its our peers or other people we affect particularly youth, there ought to be a high standard that we live up to. Perhaps with some of these people who stray off the path – they must be thinking no one will notice. That's the most foolish of all. Someone will notice. And in today's age, whether it be TMZ or the paparazzi or anybody with an email address, the word will be out. Now, that comes in two forms. Truth as well as innuendo or just flat outright lies. Mark Twain said, "Rumor will be half way around the world before truth gets his shoes tied." That's certainly the case today with electronic media whether it be Twittering or "twitterpated!"

JUNGE: He is on this morning!

SG: Yes, he is. He had a difficult travel day yesterday and when that happens, his mind just kicks into gear and you just have to go with the flow!

GERINGER: We sat on the tarmac in Helena, Montana yesterday for three hours extra because Denver was experiencing foul weather. In the mind of the air traffic controllers, it was foul weather. In the mind of most of us in the west, it was "get on with it! Let's go!"

SG: I told Jim tell them to fly to Cheyenne. The weather's gorgeous here.

GERINGER: We have had so many experiences in flying in private planes around Wyoming in some of the most unusual circumstances from icing up of the wings to flying through thunderstorms and getting beaten up in the cabin to landing in cow pastures. We think people are too soft today!

JUNGE: I can tell we're going to have a good one today. This is Mark Junge. This is day three in a series of interviews with Governor...former Governor Jim Geringer....

GERINGER: Just don't call me the Late Governor

JUNGE: Sitting here with us is his wife Sherri who may chime in every once in a while. It's June 26th of June 2009. Jim, I should have asked you in the first place. Would you rather be referred to as Governor or as Jim?

GERINGER: Jim is fine. I've been Jim a lot longer than Governor. What I tell people...And I get that question quite often...are you still Governor? Should I call you Governor? I say, "It's not required, but it is appreciated." And that's the way I propose it when people introduce me for speaking or in a conversation. I don't require it. I'm Jim but if they want to use the title, but if they want to use the title, that's appreciated.

JUNGE: Spoken like a true Wyomingite! What I would like to do today...I've got four pages and I'm not sure we're going to get through all of it.

GERINGER: It's a long summer.

JUNGE: You know I'm glad you're so amenable and so cooperative on this because I don't know if all governors, former governors would be this way frankly.

GERINGER: Well, a number of governors sit and write what their view of their term in office is. Lamar Alexander, for instance, Governor of Tennessee at the time, when he was considering a run for president. He recruited me to be one of two key advisors on his campaign before he conceded to Bob Dole – I guess that must have been in 1996. At any rate, he said, "You should keep a journal of your daily activities. Document it with photos or any other media and write it as you go because you won't have time later. I did none of the above. Mike Levitt was another one who still does keep a daily journal. Those journals, when you look back on it, are a valuable insight into their thinking of the moment. In some ways, I could go back to my emails and glean some of that just because they reflect some particular feeling or perspective of the day except for t that three-year gap in the Nixon tapes.

JUNGE: That just drives me batty because...well, you know better, but I know what we've lost. Well, last time we talked ...and I wanted to start out with a quote here that I took from an interview that was done on tape with Governor Hathaway by John Hinckley. John Hinckley was a professor of political science and history at Northwest College and I wanted to get your reaction to this or see if you had a similar experience. This comes from the tape that John Hinckley did with Governor Hinckley. Hathaway says, ("I got off badly with the "third house"...maybe it wasn't badly. If I had it to do over again, I'd do the same thing. First three weeks I was in office. You know a governor starts off first thing with the legislative session. I'm feeling my way and trying to get a hold of the job. I had a delegation of 15 lobbyists come in one day – mostly on the economics – the oil industry, stockmen, Farm Bureau, railroad, et cetera. They announced to me that they were quite unhappy with my message. They were unhappy with the way I was handling the office. Some of them said they had contributed to my campaign and they expected different results; they said they didn't think I represented the Republican Party. I said, "Well, I just spent eight months speaking with 150,000 people and I think I've got a pretty good idea....besides, I'm not governor of just the

Republicans anyway.” Then they said something that really infuriated me. They said, “If you continue on the path you’re on, you have no political future.” I stood up and pounded the desk and said, “Don’t ever come in here and threaten me with my political future. First place, I never expected to be governor of Wyoming but I’m here and I’m going to do what I think is right while I’m here and you’ll get nowhere threatening me with my political future.” They didn’t come around the rest of that session. The next session, they started to filter in as individuals but they never applied that group pressure ever again.”—Governor Stan Hathaway)

GERINGER: Yes, I can visualize Stan pounding the desk and I don’t know if he kept his cigar handy or not. Stan could be quite bellicose when he wanted to be and usually did with something like that. Stan was a man of principles. He basically threw the bums out. I had a similar experience before I even knew of Stan’s history with that same kind of thing. It probably reflects things in two ways. One is, Wyoming used to have...oh, I don’t know what you call it...an insider group, if you will. People who knew that they had influence because there wasn’t a lot of scrutiny, a lot of openness about the legislative process in particular and how the budget was put together. Quite often in years gone by— in Stan’s era, even before that but certainly during his era, the Appropriations Committee would meet downstairs and deliver a bill, a spending bill the last week or the last day of a session. That’s hardly doing things in the open. We opened everything up and so a lot more things were available to be scrutinized. Whether or not they were was up to the individual. People who felt that they had formed a team to come forward and advance the candidacy of an individual like Stan who became Governor. They might indeed genuinely feel like they didn’t get a fair shake for what they thought a person was. “All right, get it of your chest.” Doesn’t mean that you have to demand that a person behave in a certain way or you’ve compromised everybody’s principles. I’d have thrown...in fact I did. I didn’t even go to the length to tell them off. I just said, “There’s the door!”

JUNGE: What was the instance?

GERINGER: A group of people who felt that I wasn’t carrying the message that they expected. And it was from the energy industry. And when you look at what Stan did, in spite of that kind of pressure, and his vision to create the permanent Wyoming mineral trust fund -- you know the seed money of \$400,000 that’s grown to the point now where income earned off permanent funds and other investments has been typically the second largest source of revenue to the state. It’s actually happened the way he envisioned. He advocated for and signed the bill for and signed the bill for clean air laws that were the predecessor for the Federal Clean Air Act. We set the model. There are a number of things that Stan did. I don’t know where people get the notion that Republicans always anti-environment and Democrats are the other way or whatever. Whatever the presumption was by the energy industry at that point. So what Stan reflected more than anything else was “my first obligation is to the mechanism of government that has elected me by popular vote to represent a broad cross-section as well as to adhere to the principles that I told them I had because that’s the representative form. The democratic form would be you go out, gather an opinion, take polls and do whatever you are told. The representative form of government, let’s say under a republic. You do a part of that but you also say “here is what I believe and how I would do things.” You lay that on the line and the people choose which candidate most reflects their views. Not absolutely reflects their views but most. And then the majority rules.

JUNGE: Even if you had a majority ruling in a particular incident did you ever feel like you could make up your own mind on the issue and it would go against the grain?

GERINGER: I did when I vetoed bills. I didn't veto as many as some. Governor Johnson in New Mexico – I think he vetoed 400 and some bills his first session.

JUNGE: How many did you veto?

GERINGER: Oh, not that many at all.

JUNGE: Was that the line item veto?

GERINGER: Well the line item veto kind of grew out of a little different circumstance. It was in the constitution. I even called Stan. I said, "Stan, there's a section in this bill that's really going to be detrimental but I'm setting a high precedent when I do that." He cautioned me. He said, "Beware of what precedent you set for the future." I said, "I'm aware of that. I wanted your insight because you too had this discretion and you didn't exercise it." Well, I did exercise it. The legislature went into a full tilt. At that point, it was the majority thinking they ought to go one way and I thought the other. In fact, they even passed a bill as well a resolution and sent it directly to the Secretary of State and I took them to court over that. I said "all bills which includes resolutions – they interpreted it as "bills and resolutions" --all bills must be sent to the governor -- and the court agreed with me. So that created a year-long fuss and when the court finally ruled on the line item veto, any bill containing an appropriation the governor can veto any or all, any part of that bill...

JUNGE: And that was the issue at the time?

GERINGER: That was the issue. So Wyoming has..for any bill that has an appropriation or an expenditure, not any bill period – it's just any bill carrying funding.

JUNGE: I always wondered how it was for a governor of the same party of the majority of legislators in that state got along with them. This tells me that it's not always a perfect relationship.

GERINGER: Our system of governing is not designed around parties. It's designed around majority/minority, which oftentimes is equated to the two dominant parties. What it's designed for is balance of power -- judicial, legislative and executive. Having served in the legislature I would agree with at least two of my predecessors who said, "There's a difference between being in the legislature and being in the executive. You have set yourself apart when you go down to that office of the executive." And that was the case with me as well. I probably had to take issue as much with the Republican Party as I did with the Democratic Party -- although there was more of the majority view I think prevailing. So I think we do ourselves a disservice to try to separate it into political parties when in fact it's a balance of power.

JUNGE: I see. There are a number of things I want to go over with and just get your immediate reaction to the issues. On assuming the office, when you assumed the office of governor, did you have any surprises? Were there things that hit you that you said to yourself, "I was not expecting

this!”

GERINGER: Hmm.. Nothing comes immediately to mind. I felt reasonably confident because having worked with the budget for a number of years and actually having helped redesign the entire structure of the executive branch, I felt like I knew quite a bit about the executive branch. What surprised me the most was how quickly the legislature said, “We do not want to do performance-based budgeting. We don’t have the time for it. It’s confusing.” They just threw it out completely. I was surprised at that. I thought they might be more inclined to set priorities and do spending according to priorities. I learned the lesson that a lot of governing is about practical compromise. It’s not about just absolutely saying, “I have a vision in mind and we’re going to ride that thing into the ground.” You have to build it incrementally.

JUNGE: How about the pace of the office? Did the pace increase?

GERINGER: Well, not for me. Both as chair of appropriations and then as chair of the judiciary, we had far more than we could do, so I would say I would work typically 80-90 hours a week whether as a legislator or as governor. And, the one thing as a legislator, I still had full time work outside the legislature. And even though we met in the winter, I still had obligations back at the farm in Wheatland. So, workload – about the same?

JUNGE: I guess too, I was wondering about issues? Did you expect the Prebble’s jumping mouse issue or the Bells of Balangiga issue to be such an ongoing continuous issue?

GERINGER: It’s hard to say in perspective because over time you learn that the crisis of the moment wasn’t nearly as high a priority or dominating of an issue as you thought so I’m tempered by time as to whether I was surprised. Maybe Sherri could say, “Well, do you remember when?” Were there any categories that I seemed to express surprise over?

SG: I think that in general categories you weren’t surprised. You expected wildlife issues. You were very annoyed at Bruce Babbitt when he brought the wolves in without letting you know. You did not expect the whole Matthew Shepard kind of thing to happen in our state so there were some individual events that were unexpected but general categories....

GERINGER: I had expectations going into office. I don’t think there were any big shocks there except I was surprised that the legislature so quickly assumed its role and we didn’t have this hand-in-glove type of arrangement I’d more or less expected. In reflection, I think it was good. I think it’s better that the legislature do what it views as it’s job and let the executive do the executive’s job. So that was a general surprise. The specific surprises – probably the greatest surprise was probably the attack on the World Trade Center towers and whether or not that meant anything to us. The Matthew Shepard case – I was perplexed because the media had seized on that so extraordinarily hard and I guess my reflection is based on other incidents that were occurring at the same time. Matthew Shepard was just -- well -- it was a brutal murder – that was not only unconscionable but you just can’t imagine the human mind that would wreak that kind of havoc on another person. That same week, there was an eight-year-old girl that was abducted up in Park County. She was raped and then tossed into a landfill. And when Katie Couric called me up - 5:30 at Jackson Hole one day to do a live television interview – and she wanted to know about Matthew

Shepard and whether or not we ought to have some sort of hate crime. I said, “Which is the more heinous crime? The murder of Matthew Shepard or this eight year old girl?” Well, she wouldn’t hear of it. I was just being callous about Matthew Shepard. I was shocked at people were somehow saying, “Well, little girls get abducted raped and killed all the time but Matthew Shepard’s only a one-time occurrence I couldn’t figure that out. I still am perplexed today why people in the media in particular because the media only reflects what the people want to hear. They probably stoke the fire obviously but the media is a reflection of the general attitude. So that’s one thing that surprised me as an incident but in terms of issues or process I think I was quite –pretty much on track of what I expected when I assumed the office of governor.

JUNGE: Because of your previous experience mainly.

GERINGER: Yes. I think the other thing that was surprising was how long it takes to finally engage – to get things to move. We were out in San Diego harbor one day on a little bit of an outing. It was a 75-foot schooner under full sail. Somebody said, “Gov, why don’t you take the helm. Give us a little zip around the bay here.” So, I did. I knew a little bit about tacking. It was a 27-foot sloop that I’d done before, not a 75-schooner. You know -- prepare to come about and you come about, everybody did their job on the sails and after the whole event was over someone said, “Well, what was it like to be at the helm of that ship?” I said, “Well, in a way it was like being governor but the thing I liked most was I could come about and turn this ship to the right and something would react in less than two years!”

JUNGE: That’s good. When we get to these asides, this to me is interesting because it reflects how you think. I told somebody that. They said to me, “Well, how’s it going with your interview with the governor?” I said, “Great! I’m finding about things about how he thinks.” But let’s go to just the major issues that occurred during your...

GERINGER: Why is it that the flies are attracted to you?

JUNGE: Well, now wait a minute....

SG: Because he’s sweet?

GERINGER: Well, they always move to the left. I knew that trick before Barack Obama got caught on television about how to catch a fly. You catch ‘em sideways. He was going to be a dead fly there for a minute. Go ahead

JUNGE: Ok, I’ve got these divided up into topics. Electronic government, economy, environmental versus developmental concerns, education, healthcare, water, relationships with agencies, boards. If we went through every one of these, I mean we could spend an hour on each one of these, I’m sure

GERINGER: Any time you want to, I’m willing to do it....

JUNGE: Seriously?

GERINGER: I'll go as long as you want to go – not on any given day obviously...it's something that worth...because the institution of governing... there'll be those who want to look back and say "Didn't they think about this?" or "How did they think about this?" So governing isn't just understanding a process governing is how things are accomplished or failed to be accomplished.

PODCAST 5

JUNGE: Ok, well...how about electronic government. Were you the first to use email and the internet?

GERINGER: Yes. As I mentioned Reuben in A&I, when I called him up one day, I said, "Reuben, I'd kind of like to find out what it's going to take to wire the capital" because back in '95 -- actually, this was the transition into office in November, December, 1994... I guess it even goes back farther than that -- so let me just interject -- I had brought my computer to the appropriations committee -- must have been when I was in the Senate. I don't think I did in the House because there wasn't room. I was struck by the fact that we couldn't keep track of all things in a way that we could see the impact of our daily if not hourly decisions or to recall something that had been said -- or we just didn't have the ability or people didn't take the ability to recall something with a word search that we take so for granted today. I could see the potential of all that so I brought a computer into the room and would do spreadsheets and things like that. I was the only legislator to do that. Back in about 1986 I think it was, I was ...ever since I came to the legislature I was bothered by the fact that the bills as introduced quite often didn't pass in any form close to what they were introduced as. They could be amended, there could be a substitute bill and yet the public would only know what was originally introduced. Well, they could go to their libraries and look up the bills. No, they only got the original bill as filed. I said, "We ought to have a system where we can allow the public to call up all bills and all amendments. Lobbyists in particular were always interested. "How do these things change because we're trying to keep track? Not for self-serving interests. We want to know genuinely how things are progressing through the legislature." I called a session one noon hour and said, "Anybody that's interested in how we can electronically put these bills as well as its progress through the legislature with amendments online" which online then meant something totally different than today because the internet didn't exist -- the worldwide web did not exist. It was called the "DARPA Net" -- advanced research projects under Department of Defense" -- had the original internet. In fact, our son called it the "Vax" because all of the terminals were connected through a Vax computer. So, we had about 10 or 15 lobbyists and about two legislators show up -- one from the Senate and one from the House. I drew on that interest and took a proposal to the Management Council that we ought to find a way to put all of our activities into some digital form so that they could be recalled on a moment's notice or that somebody could dial up, because we had dial-up access through modems -- pretty slow in many cases -- a 300-bod modem is pretty darn slow. But at least have a current record. The Legislative Services Office was very concerned about that because they wanted to protect the integrity of THE official bill -- they had to do that. So we were discussing ways to protect the integrity of the bill -- download a part and then showed the amendments so if anybody tinkered with it, it would be an offline copy. I took that idea to the Management Council who runs the legislature during the interim and they also decide who gets to do what work as interim committee work. They appointed a select group of legislators to look into how we might do just what I had proposed -- that's putting all of our bills including appropriations into electronic

form that the public could access. And during the discussion on that, one of them asked, “Why do we want to do this?” I said, “Have you ever watched the members of the House? There are 60 members of the House. Bills are passed out in advance. As soon as introduced, they hit your desk. As soon as they hit somebody’s desk, somebody wants to amend it. Quite often it’s an amendment that only takes up one or two lines. So, to save paper, the Legislative Services Office would print up –there might be as many as eight or nine strips of paper on one 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper and they’d just snip it off and pass it so your desk was always full of these snippets of paper and the most studious ones would take them and paste them into their bills and see them in context but most often they didn’t. And especially, when it got to third reading, people really didn’t know what version of the bill they were voting on. I was concerned that people voted on things that had nothing to do with what they thought it was. Instead, watched how Bill voted or Bob voted or somebody like that. That’s not your job. Your job is to know what you’re voting on. So, this studious group went off and met for nine months and when they came back in November for recommendations on what I thought would be an all electronic form of bill management they proposed a change to the legislative procedures manual to limit third reading amendments. That was their entire answer. From then on, I said there’s got to be a way where, number one, legislators are fully informed on what they are voting on by seeing it in context because seeing a change in context changes a whole bill – or could. The public has a right to know so they can hold them accountable. That was my dual goal. It took another ten years before that was even possible.

JUNGE: Whoa! When did you start? ’86?

GERINGER: Yes. ’86. Now, coming back to when I was in office. We called several different groups. There was IBM with Lotus – actually Lotus I don’t think was part of IBM then. There was Lotus, there was Microsoft and there was GroupWise. GroupWise was under..oh, what was the company in Utah at the time? Novell. Novell, yeah, they had bought Correl out of Canada as a competitor to Word. So, I interviewed them all and basically we liked the Microsoft Office Suite but we didn’t want to go with Outlook – well, governor Leavitt of Utah was my mentor coming into office. All governors mentor somebody else when they come in. At least to a degree.... not very substantively over time. I said, “This is a local company, we ought to try with GroupWise.” So that’s how we ended up with Group Wise was email. And we implemented it and had a full training course for everybody that wanted to use it. That occurred during my first year in office and in my first total state-of-the-state address back in 1996, back in November of 1995, I ran across this company called Real Audio out in Washington...I think that was Maria Cantwell’s company, who’s now a U.S. Senator. I told Jimmy Orr. I said, “Jimmy – figure this out. We need to do this during the session where we can broadcast live on what has become the Internet.” See the Internet is oftentimes confused. The Internet is the overall electronic network. The World Wide Web is a part of that and the World Wide Web consortium was pretty much in second place behind what was called the Minnesota Gopher. Ever use SYSM in A&I? SYSM That was the early version of the State of Wyoming’s email system -- it was cumbersome – it was lousy!

SG: You’re getting quite a history lesson here.

JUNGE: This is great. A lot of people don’t know this. I don’t!

GERINGER: Minnesota was going to charge a fee for all commercial and other uses including

possibly personal use of what developed into the full-blown Internet. The World Wide Web consortium decided, “We’re going to make it free.” So, they voted in 1992 or 1993...early. I had quite a conversation with Tim Bernards-Lee, now Sir Tim Bernards-Lee who is considered to be the father of the World Wide Web and he was relating the story of how in April of 1993 and they declared that the World Wide Web would be free and available to all and immediately people just -- the whole business industry abandoned the Minnesota version and went over to World Wide Web – I think for good reason. It helped us understand how open communication could be when you depend on the creativity of people instead of charging everybody along the way. That’s why IBM -- which the DOS system purchased by Microsoft became so popular because it was an open platform that everybody could work on where Apple chose to go with a closed platform that only they could work on.

JUNGE: Who was it? Apple. Oh yeah.

GERINGER: Steve Jobs with his original Apple Computer. The Apple was the earliest and the best and it’s still probably one of the best operating systems but its not as ubiquitous as the others because it wasn’t opened up to the people.

JUNGE: Are you a Mac person or PC person?

GERINGER: Oh, a PC just because of the availability – Mac because it was easy to use. But coming back to state government. It started out as ...kind of bumpy –people...I still think even today substitute an electronic communication for what ought to be verbal. Go talk to somebody. How often do you see people texting –it takes them five minutes to do a text when it would take 30 seconds in a phone call. We’ve lost some personal interaction but we have a lot more other kinds of interaction so they probably balance out.

JUNGE: I have trouble, that very same problem with my son Dan who is a filmmaker down in Colorado. He said, “Mark, just email me.” Well, I think for his purposes, the email means it frees him up to control his schedule whereas if I’m demanding his time and he’s got three or four other people – and you would have had this problem easily as governor – it says, “Here’s a question or here’s a problem, responds to it at your convenience.”

GERINGER: Yeah. I like that. And that’s the way our staff worked too and it really enhanced our productivity. I had the smallest direct staff as governor of any of the 50 states. In part, most governors will set up what they call their “policy person” for just about every area of governor so they duplicate almost every department for which they appoint the director. “Here’s my policy director for education, here’s my policy director for energy, here’s my policy director for this or that.” Well, if your director’s not a good policy person – the head of that department, get a better one. Why do you have to have policy in administration over here and policy over here? It becomes – well, it’s inefficient as a form of governing. Just as a method of governing, you don’t implement what you want to do if you don’t trust the person that you put in charge to be governor for that department.

JUNGE: You had a cabinet.

GERINGER: I had a cabinet. I appointed the cabinet directors.

JUNGE: Were you the first person to have a cabinet?

GERINGER: Mike Sullivan also had a cabinet but it was under the bill that we had passed that I helped author. He did not convene the cabinet very often. It actually was an improvement because under Ed Herschler and everybody prior the State of Wyoming was run by 85 boards and commissions and those boards and commissions in many ways were autonomous from the governor. The governor just collected their respective budget requests, compiled them and forwarded it to the legislature. So the executive, the governor, as a position was very weak. We, as a legislature, chose to redesign that into a cabinet form particularly when the budgets were so tight we had to make some choices. At the time when Governor Herschler and then Governor Sullivan, for awhile would just forward the agency budgets --they felt they had very little discretion over what they could do because the boards and commissions pretty much ran those organizations. So, that was consolidated into just --- I think we authorized up to 14 separate cabinets level distinctions and then others we called separate operating agencies like the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission or the National Guard or something like that.

JUNGE: So the cabinet members corresponded to the heads of the agencies?

GERINGER: Yes. They were the cabinet. I would invite the other separate operating agencies to participate in the cabinet meetings but the key issues were discussed among the cabinet members themselves and then I had sub-cabinets as well.

SG: I was just going to say that with your sub-cabinets, with your groupings – that was pretty innovative as well. I found that at national meetings that I would go to people were just in awe that you could get the agencies to share funding for a particular issue.

GERINGER: What Sherri is referring to is what we called our sub-cabinets. We had for instance the natural resources sub-cabinet made up of the state engineer, agriculture, water – natural resources, the full range.

JUNGE: Oil and gas included?

GERINGER: Yeah. Then the human resource sub-cabinet would be education, family services – the major things that dealt with those kinds of issues and I required them to review each other's budgets before they brought it to me because education and workforce and social services all worked with the many of the same people or on issue that if they complimented each other could advance the whole issue of say workforce development or advancing people off of welfare through a combination of good programming as well as coordinated delivery of services. Don't piecemeal it.

JUNGE: With a possible cut in expenditures?

GERINGER: Well, obviously yeah but six years of really tight budgets -- we wanted to do that too. More than anything, it was driven by better delivery of services so that the people that were

served were served better and the budget savings were significant but they were secondary to that overall goal. What surprised me, you know when you asked earlier are there things that surprised me, when I convened the first Workforce Development Conference, we had the community colleges, the Department of Employment, the Family Services organization --when we brought all the people that had anything to do with workforce into the room -- there were people introducing themselves to each other that had never met and they worked in the same building. I said, "What's wrong with this?" The cabinet form of government is supposed to foster interaction. It had not. So, having the process embodied in statute or even in constitution that you're going to have a cabinet form of government doesn't mean it will function as intended unless the execution is there. That's what I learned and was surprised at early on and what precipitated that was before I called the first Workforce Development conference I had probably eight different entities come in and request my support to send off a grant application for vocational education or workforce training. As I say, eight different groups -- most of them were non-profit, non-governmental organizations but a couple of were in government and they wanted a \$250,000 grant for this or a \$500,000 for that and I said, "Well, somebody else is working in those same areas. Why don't you work with them?" They said, "We have a different approach to that." What it finally turned out was the executive director who was going to administer these grants each had to cover their own office expense and salary expense first. I thought, "You know, we could consolidate eight grants into one and get far better results and have a whole lot less overhead." That's what precipitated the first Workforce conference was people weren't working together, they were too segmented. They weren't delivering the way they ought to deliver.

JUNGE: Didn't you have some antipathy or some antagonism?

GERINGER: Oh, I had a lot! You start to mess with one person's agenda and they get all their constituents rallied against you. They were legion!

JUNGE: So, despite the logic of it all, there again, it's the politics of the situation.

GERINGER: Politics, but it's also.... I always emphasize, you have to have purpose over process. Government is so consumed and enamored with its own process that it forgets why it even exists. But having said that, you can have vision with clear purpose in mind, and if you have lousy execution it is of no good purpose. You have to have that combination of execution toward a goal or toward a vision or the purpose really dies or falls by the wayside and that's what could have happened there.

JUNGE: But it didn't.

GERINGER: It didn't. We managed to...well, for instance, when we finally set up a process whereby the review for people on temporary assistance for needy families or welfare they had to ...well, first of all, I required that they shorten a 43-page document down to one or two pages so that when the applicant filled it out they knew what they were doing. That was atrocious. Make it simple! My criteria was for anybody that wrote a letter for me to sign or had a form to fill out I said, "Go read that to your mother. Would she understand it? If she wouldn't understand it, don't expect me to send it out. Get to the point!" So the sub-cabinet form of governing was not only a more efficient process for getting things done, it actually got more accomplished in terms of

purpose. We went from welfare rolls of nearly 6,000 people in Wyoming so a fairly significant percentage – we had it down to like 678 people on welfare – total. We had a 92% reduction and after five years, 82% of the people who had been on welfare were still working. And it wasn't for bragging rights. It was saying it's an affirmation of the process we set in place to where education worked with family services, it worked with the Department of Employment, the community colleges. And they took the initiative—the presidents of the community college set up training centers where they could take people who had been on welfare, take some of the money they would have been paid, set up a training opportunity, help them scout the market place and whether it's an entry level job or not, worked to increase their skills. One of the things I emphasized as far as the job count in Wyoming. "We want more jobs in Wyoming." I said, "Well, you don't want just jobs, you want more jobs that are higher quality, higher pay." We can get a lot of jobs but you might have to hold three or four of those to make ends meet. So I had a very strong push for everybody to always increase their capabilities. State government in particular – I find this across the country -- when it comes time to trim budgets they would cut out things that actually could enhance their opportunity to do better. "Cut out out-of-state travel, cut out any training. That's discretionary" I told all of my cabinet directors, "You should have a goal that everyone of your employees works him or her out of their current job." And I'd let that sink in for a minute. They said, "What do you mean? Are you trying to get rid of state employees?" I said, "No. They should all feel that they're bettering their circumstance. They should always be allowed to learn more receive the education they need to move beyond where they currently are."

JUNGE: Hmm. Let's see. We have plenty of time. Have you ever read Tom Friedman's book "The World is Flat."

GERINGER: Yes.

JUNGE: He has a similar idea...and there is an argument against it. We talk about the jobs going overseas. A lot of people complain that we're not creating jobs here. We're shipping them overseas. Basically what he is saying, if I read him saying, if people catch up to where we're at on the Internet and if they technologically improve themselves they will create jobs, which in turn our people can fill. So, he was looking at the globalization process and he was looking a large picture. On the other hand, I remember – it must have been in Jim Lehrer's News Hour, some governor or legislator, some member of Congress got up and said that's fine for the long run but we have people right now that are out of work so there was a this conflict in his idea and this man saw this Frieman's idea as a little callous for all the people that are in transition.

GERINGER: Yes. But I see the point. What I was advocating for state employees and it extended even more significantly into the teaching profession was that if people know that they have the governor's backing or their supervisor's backing to improve their lot they will feel better about their job, their productivity goes up, they are more faithful in the execution of their job. They actually look for ways to improve because they know they are being complimented and as much as possible rewarded for taking initiative.

SG: The other thing that happens in state government is that you can't give bonuses.

GERINGER: Yes. State government is so socialized – in the teaching profession in particular –

totally socialized independently of talent. We reclassified state employment descriptions. We cut them by a factor of three I think. There are so many different segments of employee classification it was impossible to judge performance. The goal wasn't to judge performance. It was to enhance opportunity for the delivery of services and to give the employee an opportunity to better their own situation. Government in many ways is a substitute for welfare. It does not function to deliver services to people. It functions to employ people.

JUNGE: What do you tell the person who asks you the question, "Ok, if you want my employees to work themselves out of a job?" What then? How is that an improvement?

GERINGER: Perhaps you're misinterpreting when I say "work themselves out of a job" because I think that happened with our cabinet people. I wasn't trying to get rid of people in a department. I wanted them to always look at the next opportunity to improve their job or to receive a promotion. So, it wasn't to leave state government but in part, it was to say "what is the purpose of your organization" when we have a dramatic increase in drug offenses, when we have a dramatic increase in youth that need treatment because of juvenile delinquency. Isn't it our job to work ourselves out of a job? We should not have this job. We are improving the service to where we don't need this government intervention -- in other words, we're preventing or mitigating it to where it's not needed. Or, we're improving the capability and productivity of the individual so it's working out of a job in two different ways -- one is self-improvement and the other is eliminating the curse that brought us to this place.

JUNGE: Sure. I can see where a person might get a little frightened of that.

GERINGER: Oh, they did. I'm out there with the evil axe.

JUNGE: Maybe it was just a communication thing. Maybe they didn't truly understand what you were talking about just like I didn't.

GERINGER: Oh sure. That's another challenge that any manager has, or CEO. --- how do you get the word out. I looked upon email as a way to get word out quickly and of course probably the most significant way of that that finally came to bear fruit in a tough situation was the 9-11 incident. Everybody was so confused about what does this mean. Are we vulnerable? Well, we could be because Dick Cheney was from Wyoming. If this whole thing is symbolic, are they going to blow up the Capitol or Old Faithful or, you know. The Federal Government was demanding information from us. We'd say, "Ok, here's everything we know. Tell us what's going on." They'd say, "Oh we can't. You're not cleared." The media was calling and saying, "What do you make of this?" because the governor is expected to have access to more information, more insights than anybody else. Can the Governor interpret this for us so we know what actions to take? So I sent out an email to all state employees. That's when I found out that we had five different email systems... Did I say that five times?... saying "if you have family, friends, if you wish to stay at work, please do...don't feel obligated to do your job...take care of each other but if you have friends or family that need attention go to them. Be where you need to be. That had an immediate calming effect. It was just so reassuring for people to know that we don't have to do anything dramatic, but we need to take care of each other. That's an example of how quickly that type of communication could be brought about. Today, we take it for granted but back then... that was

2001. When you think of prior to that, the Governor had to have a news conference and hope that the media would print it or post a note on the bulletin board or try some other physical means of communicating. It's difficult to communicate even in today's age but it's more likely to occur today than it was then.

JUNGE: This is going back quite a ways to what you were talking back with this World Wide Web – what was the name of the fellow who is the father of the World Wide Web?

GERINGER: Tim Berners-Lee.

JUNGE: Tim Berners-Lee. And you had a long conversation with him? Did you have anything at all to do with the development of that?

GERINGER: No, No.

JUNGE: Even in the Air Force, you didn't?

GERINGER: Oh, no I had more to do with remote sensing --not the networking itself. I could see the potential of it. I guess I received my first introduction to the Apple Computer while in the Air Force because it was a little sidebar activity among several of us that decided that this new Apple Computer was a neat thing and we had Apple users groups and found ways to communicate with each others through this little primitive thing called the Internet – which we didn't call it – I don't know what we called it at the time – it was just a list-serve. So I had nothing to do with the Internet per se but I saw its potential.

JUNGE: And you were the first person in the legislature to actually bring a laptop? Or was it a laptop?

GERINGER: It was a desktop. An Apple II E Computer. We didn't have notebooks or laptops then.

JUNGE: Oh, it was an Apple II? Well then, if you had five different systems eventually, how did you reconcile them all? Did you just mandate that all the agencies be under one system?

GERINGER: I thought I did.

JUNGE: But n-o-o-o!!

GERINGER: No! I kept finding out more and more how people did things differently. Later on when Tom Ridge, who was governor of Pennsylvania during my time in office – when he was tasked to head up the original Department of Homeland Security after it was the Office of Homeland Security, -- we ran into Tom and his wife Michelle at an event in Washington, D.C., I said, “Well, Tom, what's the toughest thing you've had so far in homeland security?” He said, “Merging 23 email systems.” I said, “I don't feel so bad!”

JUNGE: What system did you end up with?

GERINGER: We had GroupWise for email. I think the entire system now is shifting over to Outlook. Outlook uses the Microsoft Office Suite for all of its' email processing so it's easier maintenance. Microsoft is still a very cumbersome, very inefficient, high overhead program. It's whole Office Suite is – it's not a model of efficacy or efficiency but it's most prevalent so but you take what's available.

JUNGE: Why do you suppose it took the legislature so long to adopt something that you saw as being so valuable to their own work?

GERINGER: In a way it reflects the -- I call it discomfort of knowing what's going on. I recall during a debate on a budget bill in the Wyoming Senate when different members would ask questions and we'd stand up and answer them and everything that they would put out to try to change the course of our budget recommendations or put something in or take something out that they wanted to do, we presented the facts, the logic, the reason for the way we had recommended the bill – not to insist that they had to go our way. Finally Jim Twyford stood up and said, "You guys in Appropriations bug me. You know too much!"

JUNGE: He's from Douglas, right?

GERINGER: Douglas. Right. But he reflected I think many other members' feelings. You know so much that we can't even contend with you on this bill. And I thought, "Why should we be the only holders of that information? Why shouldn't that be available to everybody – or to the public?" The collective wisdom is really enhanced if people are better informed. Now it can be misused of course but our goal, my goal was to engage people more widely. The rationale behind decisions could be communicated so that was the positive side of communicating why I did something. The other side -- I'm not perfect in my judgment or my assessment -- so why not have someone else contribute?

JUNGE: Do you think that their reluctance had anything to do with the age of the legislator and his inability to think he could grasp the technology that you had already grasped?

GERINGER: In a way age because of exposure, but not age per se. In other words, the youth of today has been exposed from an early age to the digital means of getting anything done whether it be Game Boys or cell phones or anything else. Things have advanced so tremendously. I have to go back and put it the perspective that it was not technology for its own sake. It was well...let me tell you an anecdote and then tell you how it fits into technology. Christie, my scheduler, was from the northeast part of Wyoming. A group of young people came down to go the stock show one day and they were eighth graders. They stopped into to see Christie and Christie said, "You want to go in and see the Governor?" They said, "Oh, yeah! Let's go in and see him!" So it was late in the day. We just had a few minutes. I felt very comfortable with them. They were just kids off the ranch. I expected to have a nice chat with them but they were just kind on edge. The office does something to people. They walk in there intimidated. So, they were a little bit quiet at first and then I finally got them to talk. So I said, "Do you have any questions?" And this one young lady kind of sized me up and said, "Why did you run for Governor?" It was almost that way. It was almost an accusation. "Why?" I thought, "How can I answer this for eighth graders? And I said, 'Have you

ever sat in class and the teacher asked a question and you knew the answer and all of a sudden you just put your hand up and said, I know the answer! That was the feeling I had when I decided to step up run for governor?” And she thought about that for a minute and she said, ‘Well, then what was the question?’ I said, “Well, now we’re getting somewhere. The question was why don’t more people stay in state after they get their high school or college degree? Why do we lose our young people? Why can’t we do something to keep them here?” We had a good conversation after that. Coming to email in state government or technology in general, most governors try to approach creation of jobs by targeting sectors. “Well, we’re going to grow jobs here. We’re going to grow them in energy. It’s going to be a green economy. We’re going to do manufacturing or whatever it may be.” I thought that I have no particular insight into what might really take hold in Wyoming. We have a sparsity – a density – how do you have that critical mass that finally engages something where in Silicon Valley where if you quit your job in one place you can walk down the street and get another? Where in Wyoming can you do that other than in state government? I thought, “Well, what’s the most effective way where we can engage the creativity and innovation of all sectors in Wyoming and maybe even create some new ones which is what I wanted to do? Well, the common denominator was technology. How could we advance the use of technology in a productive way so that it could be telemedicine – a delivery to remote areas in the state where you could have higher quality of healthcare to do what you needed to do because you chose to live in a sparse area? Or, remote interrogation for court appearances or distance learning for education when you have only five kids in a class in one town and two in another and five in yet another, why not link them together and make them one cohort and learn together?

JUNGE: So, if technology is the answer in a state like Wyoming, how do you build the momentum?

GERINGER: That was the hard part. The concept, the vision was technology in a digital age for what we called “the new economy.” We used that term “The New Economy” where you create that capability to move from centralized to decentralized governing as well as create the opportunity to bring in higher quality jobs. You can live anywhere and work anywhere else. Well, to do that you need a backbone and a network. First of all, you have to have the literacy to even do it, which is why I emphasized technology for teaching so that you raise the next generation to be aware of it. But also that you engage the teachers to be more productive in their use of resources and students who are capable can be self-initiated and self-directed in their learning so now all you have what every teacher would like and that’s more time. Students are able to be self-motivated and teaching each other take off. That differentiates their learning. They can be able to learn at the pace that they want. The ones who need more attention, the teacher has more time. How do we teach the teacher to manage that time using the tools at their availability? I probably spent more time on education than any other issue in the state to change the next generation and how we teach them. But for the rest of the economy and all of state services, how do we get a toehold? Well, it wasn’t just putting in fiber lines, which we did a lot of. We made the first loop of any state to connect not only all of our schools through the Internet and community colleges and the University but to connect them to each other. I think South Dakota probably had all of their schools connected to the Internet just slightly ahead of Wyoming but we were the first state to encourage the collaboration between and among schools so kids could take advanced placement courses or they could take courses that otherwise wouldn’t be taught in Beulah or Baggs or places like that. And industry, Jackson Hole, at that time was kind of becoming a mini financial hub and also a hub for

cataloging and processing sales for non-prescription drugs. We had two really burgeoning enterprises going on up there. What did they need? They needed more connectivity. Fitch Rating Services for bonds, operating out of Powell, Wyoming. They needed bandwidth – they needed to be able to connect. The owner of the company at the time wanted to live and work in Wyoming but still manage this Fitch Rating and Investor Service where his choice was to be in midtown Manhattan and he didn't care to live there. He wanted to live in Powell, Wyoming. He adopted Wyoming. It needed connectivity. So then there were the two aspects. Three, really. Overall literacy of how the technology could work so people would use it. The connectivity so that they had it available to them and preparing the next generation so that you would create the density for utilization. And to transition part of that, the idea would be that the state would be an anchor tenant just as the old shopping center concept where you have Sears or Nordstrom's or somebody anchoring the overall complex to draw people in and all these hole in the wall niche operations could flourish because they drew the crowd into it. So, we viewed the state as an anchor tenant in several areas – education, health and telemedicine and then correctional and the public safety and judicial services. So, we had a great partnership with the judicial branch. Judge Thomas at the time and Larry Lehman were both strong advocates of using technology to advance not only how we took depositions, manage the court docket but also the follow-up. It a great relationship that we had between the executive and the judiciary to understand the impact each had on the other. We still had the separation of powers but I regularly invited the judges to come either to my office. I had at least a once a year, typically twice a year meeting with the five Supremes in my office.

JUNGE: Don't you feel in a way ...remember Bill Gates developing Microsoft in his garage with Paul Allen? Don't you feel in a way that you were a voice crying in the wilderness. It takes ages for people to make changes and here you were miles ahead of the curve.

GERINGER: And that's where I have to reflect back and say there's something wrong with execution if you have a vision and it's not accomplished as quickly as you'd like, what's wrong with the execution? I can look back and say everything that I hoped to happen pretty much has. So in a way, it has caught on. But my approach even today is - it's not -- I don't want to develop "I" trouble, it's not what "I" did – it's what "we" did. When something finally takes hold to a point where the leader can let go and the people say, "Look what we did together." Then you have the right approach.

JUNGE: Yes, but you were a catalyst. You were the catalyst for this and it takes a catalyst to get people moving.

GERINGER: That's why I pushed for state government to be involved with technology -- particularly education so that people would see that it's not oppressive. It's not frustrating. It's not something that you just want to "I don't like this stuff! I want to hit the computer" type of thing.

SG: Jim always sees things that other people don't because he looks at the big picture and all of the influences coming in and that is where then that he has a vision of where we are and where we could be and how we get there.

GERINGER: It's kind of in a way... probably the best description would be I spent three years with what was called "disaster preparedness" as a reservist as "incident commander" or "on-scene

commander”, the ranking officer or the ranking official who takes charge of a dire situation – a forest fire, bomb, explosion, a wreck, tornado or whatever. To use a sports analogy Wayne Gretzke used to say, “I don’t skate to where the puck is, I skate to where the puck is going to be!” Well, I always wanted to be where the puck was going to be. Sometimes I got roughed up along the way.

JUNGE: Kind of like a pool player who plans his shots three banks in advance.

GERINGER: Or a chess player. That’s the whole idea of chess player. Let me introduce another thought that we can follow up on because it’s important. The other thing that I had proposed as a vision was the whole idea of community-based services. Instead of institutionalizing people or making people travel to state services, whether they be the elderly or juveniles or any state service that we provide - workforce -- do it in the community. Keep people in their homes. Did you ever see the film, “Dad” with Jack Lemmon where he became so disoriented in his elder years? My dad experienced that and that was a situation where he was hospitalized and totally lost track with reality because he was out of his environment. And I thought, “That’s what the elderly need more than anything else is a familiarity of community, of home. And why do we drag them...first, we require them to become penniless so we can put them into an institution and a place where there’s no quality of life but we sustain their life.” Well, that’s not living, that’s just physical respiration.

JUNGE: I totally agree with you on that.

GERINGER: So, we targeted all of our services to be more, as much community-centered as possible and that would be another vignette I guess, or path to go down as to how we guided so much of our state services, whether it be education -- let students learn where they want to learn – not just pack them off to some boarding school. And, also give the opportunity for people to, I guess, in education in particular take courses that will further their own capability.

(There is chatter as Richard Collier, photographer and Sue Castaneda, project coordinator, arrive)

JUNGE: Let me just explain to you what we were going to cover – you cut across the spectrum of ideas or subjects I was going to ask you to talk about. Technology just cuts through all of these areas– economy ...

GERINGER: The philosophy behind it was it’s a tool to enable greater potential by everyone – not necessarily picking favorites but targeting my own favorites, which included education, and then opening it up to where more people could participate. I had a contrary view. You expand the capability of what that power could deliver so tremendously. Well, but it also conforms very well to our system of governing which is a representative form where you don’t just let -- democracy taken to the extreme becomes anarchy where people become totally self-serving instead of public serving. So, the idea that I could still convey to whoever wanted to elect me at the time that here’s the way I see things could be done and they could follow it all along the way and when they chose to disagree they could.

JUNGE: Here’s a question I was going to save towards the end but it might just serve as a wrap-up

today -- what do you think your father would of have thought of that idea – that you should involve other people?

GERINGER: I think he would have welcomed it?

JUNGE: So he would have been happy with what you were trying to do?

GERINGER: Oh yeah. He was fascinated that I would even be elected to the legislature. He didn't live to see me elected as Governor. Mom did. Sherri's mother did not. Her father did. We each had a parent who was there for the initial inauguration when Stan swore me in.

JUNGE: Ok, so next time we'll cover education – we've already got education but there are a couple of other questions that I want to ask about No Child Left Behind and prayer in school and things like that. Healthcare, water, relationships with Nebraska governor on the water issues – Nelson. Social issues –and then questions about your being CEO of 13,000 employees. And then a summary. I think the summary is going to be the fun part because then we're going to tap into your philosophy – your overall...

GERINGER: As though I haven't had any huh? As though I haven't given it to you?

JUNGE: No, you have and I want Sue to know that because she set this up Jim has given us not just specific events and anecdotes and Sherri too has helped in that respect but he's given us his whole approach. His whole approach and how he views government and you just heard it. It's a very democratic way to approach government. I have a feeling it's radically different from some of the governors we've had in the past.

GERINGER: Well, depends on the personality. A governor or any CEO that feels like they have to be in charge is reluctant to let go and that's why I told all of my cabinet appointees, "You're the governor for that department. You do well with my backing and I'm your resource provider and I'm the one that lives with your choices." I had to get rid of two of my key people because they were doing things unethically. One, he thought, for a very good reason. He was manipulating the numbers so he could draw down more money from the Federal Government to serve the people he thought that needed the service. I said, "The cause might be justifiable but the mechanism is illegal. I cannot tolerate this! You are governor up to a point and if you screw up I have to remove you. If you don't, I'll back you up all the way."

JUNGE: Did you have to remove this person?

GERINGER: I did.

JUNGE: Part of your cabinet?

GERINGER: He was a dear friend – he looked after my health – he made sure I had a supply of racquetballs. It was tough -- I let at least three people go for what I thought considered to be bad judgment but which in some way was unethical and I wanted to set a high standard. I couldn't compromise how government ought to run.

JUNGE: One of the criticisms I think of Herschler was "...he should have gotten rid of that guy! He kept him on much longer than he should have kept him on."

GERINGER: There is a difference between inept, incomplete or lack of performance and somebody who does something that is just wrong. We started our conversation with some innuendo about traveling to Argentina tosomebody said, "He went fishing....well, I hope he didn't catch anything!"

JUNGE: Well, the point is that Herschler may have felt a real loyalty personally to some people despite their obvious incompetence's.

GERINGER: Ed had that trait. Oh, what was his name? He had a nametag that said, "Governor's Gofer." He was the gopher for everything – g-o-f-e-f. Go-fer this, go-fer that!

PODCAST 6

SG: Before Jim was ever in office, we never would get our picture taken unless it was for the church directory or something but that was about the extent of it. But when he was in office...

GERINGER: And almost never received a print. I had pictures with president, former presidents, all kinds of people. And then of course people would stop by the office and we almost never received a copy of it.

JUNGE: Well, did you ask for them?

GERINGER: I made the assumption that staff...or that someone was following it. Actually, I just made an assumption that the people who took the picture would have the courtesy to send a picture so it never occurred to me. I might say "Well, (a year later) I played golf with George H.W. Bush and they took our picture out there on the links..I wonder whatever happened to that."

SG: Some of them, they would send...the White House was really bad about not sending them. Every time we be there for the dinner with the governors, they'd take a picture and I think we have two out of the eight years, seven years.

GERINGER: That was true of both Clinton and Bush.

JUNGE: That's terrible. You should have a better record than that.

SG: We still have dozens and hundreds – probably thousands of snapshots that were taken over the years or either by staff or there were some people, we'd go to an event in another state and they'd take pictures and send us copies. I have got boxes of pictures!

JUNGE: Have you gone through those?

SG: No.

JUNGE: You'd rather go through the box that has the pictures of the grandkids!

GERINGER: We haven't categorized them either. We have one daughter in law that does quite a bit of scrap booking. Actually, well she's probably winding down how much she's done. Just as with our children -- we had probably a thousand pictures of the first year of our first child and by the third we probably had ten.

JUNGE: Which they're going back to you on and say, "This isn't fair!"

GERINGER: Oh, they already have!

JUNGE: Well, today is the 3rd of July, 2009. I'm Mark Junge and here at the home of Jim and Sherri Geringer. It's a nice day but it's overcast. It's been pretty warm here for the last week or so.

GERINGER: It's warm but can you believe, still very green. I haven't seen the grass this tall when it went to seed for I don't know how long. In fact, I was remarking to the people back in Wheatland last week, I can only remember one other time when the rain was sufficient to raise first cutting hay without an irrigation -- that's alfalfa hay. The amount of moisture we've had in the last month has just been amazing. I guess it's been since 1995 that we've had that much moisture. The reason I mention '95, when I came into office we had been in an extended drought. Mike Sullivan had created a drought task force. We were trying to anticipate what agriculture could do, what cities could do for water supplies. It was a full range of things. Come May of that year, I decided I'd better reconstitute the drought task force, so we got the people appointed and established the first meeting and on May 14th, it clouded up and rained, of all things. Must have done the right thing. And it didn't stop raining until June 14th and it rained 14 inches.

JUNGE: And you constituted the drought task force!

SG: And then deconstituted it!

GERINGER: Yes, that's right. So that's the last year that we had that much moisture in that short of time at the right time of year for the crops.

JUNGE: Did it fill the reservoirs?

GERINGER: Pretty much. In the ensuing period, there were still very dry times...below normal precipitation. I remember talking to the state climatologist. I said, "You know, under the previous governor there were about five years of drought. In my term of office, we've had seven. At what point do we have a new norm that we measure against instead of saying that we're below norm on precipitation?" He said, "You're either at the end...let's see...that would have been twelve years...he said, "You either have a new norm or you're going through a thirty-year drought." In other words he was saying, this is either an extended drought and you're only seeing the first twelve years or maybe this is the new norm. There are cycles where you can have an extended period of drought up to thirty years, a hundred years...well, a hundred would be too long but the message he was conveying was there are climate variations that you have to anticipate and you

can't just look at the short term.

JUNGE: And so we are in an extended drought still?

GERINGER: We have been up until this year.

JUNGE: Hmm.. I wonder if we're pulling out of it ...is there any indication that we're pulling out of it. Is this just a phenomenon?

GERINGER: Probably a greater question is what's happening overall with what's referred to commonly as climate change. Climate changes all the time so it's kind of a misnomer. Global warming was the word that became so politicized that climate change was and has been the word that has categorized what's happening in many ways what is permanently changing what's happening in the climate and the greatest factor is probably the ocean. It's the one situation we know the least about – how much the oceans affect our climate. So for Wyoming's purposes for what the long term modeling looks like, we could see some increase in precipitation while the rest of the country south of us sees a decrease.

JUNGE: Really?

GERINGER: Yes.

JUNGE: Our average precipitation in Cheyenne I believe is about 14 inches a year.

GERINGER: That's probably close to it.

JUNGE: And I think right now we're between 10 and 11.

GERINGER: Think we're close to four inches above normal.

JUNGE: In Wheatland, what would the average be?

GERINGER: It's about the same. It's been kind of interesting to watch over the last few years with the winter storms -- especially what was it, two or three years ago when we had a blizzard every week for it seemed like five weeks. Denver and Cheyenne got quite a bit of snow. Wheatland received zero. So there just seemed to be a line of demarcation right up at Horse Creek Hill.

JUNGE: There's funny things that happen in the Rocky Mountain Region. My father lived in Bailey, Colorado. He used to call it the Banana Belt. He'd say, "They're having snow down in Denver, but it's great up here!" Strange how these pockets of climate are different.

GERINGER. It really is. You go south of Cheyenne, once you pass down over that hill to Wellington it's a different climate in the wintertime especially. Up in Wheatland, the wind blows just like it does here in Cheyenne but you can go over to Guernsey barely twenty miles away and there will be zero wind.

JUNGE: Is that because you are a little bit higher up?

GERINGER: Guernsey's actually lower.

JUNGE: No, I mean Wheatland.

GERINGER: Oh, Wheatland. I don't understand the atmospheric patterns that create wind. I mean, I know what wind is caused from. It's caused by pressure differential but why it can be completely calm next to an area, relatively speaking almost adjacent, and have no air movement in one place and high velocity in another. And even as we watched the particulate coming out to the power plant in Wheatland, there'd be a strong west wind blowing and you'll that kind of a brown cloud headed east and then it circles around and that ridge up north of Wheatland that kind of divides between Glendo, Guernsey and Wheatland, that cloud will follow back around and go almost all the way to the west with a westerly wind blowing in our neck of the woods-- so ground contour has something to do with it, pressure differentials in the air. I don't know how to explain it. I'm not a meteorologist.

JUNGE: Yeah, but you know what, I think you had to be an amateur one as a farmer.

GERINGER: You had to read the clouds.

JUNGE: Yeah. But if it wasn't for irrigation, you'd be lost.

GERINGER: No, that's why so many people had dry land wheat up here of course, and then grazing. I think there are only about five counties in Wyoming that do much intensive cropping – Platte, Goshen, the area up around Powell, Worland. There just aren't that many counties that get into that much intensive agriculture and of course they do have to have irrigation. And many of them went into center pivots to conserve water and to spread it over larger areas because there was such a surplus of wheat for such a long time. The conservation reserve program went into effect and much of the land here around Cheyenne that's now being developed was originally wheat and then put into CRP as it was called. The CRP was just left in place –vegetation and grass was put back in.

JUNGE: What was CRP?

GERINGER: Conservation Reserve Program.

JUNGE: Ok, as long as we're on this subject. The presence of center pivots, I noticed on my trip across the country on oxygen, didn't diminish too much until somewhere around Grand Island. The 100th meridian was what John Wesley Powell, the geologist explorer as you may know – the 100th meridian was his dividing point. Beyond the 100th meridian things were more arid and you couldn't expect to raise crops the way you could east of that point in the Mississippi Valley. But I noticed that even as I approached the Mississippi there were places in Iowa that had center pivots.

GERINGER: Yeah and part of that is to provide more certainty to the crop – you could go ahead

and count on the weather in Iowa and places you're talking about probably had at least 44 inches of rain a year – that should be enough to raise a crop. Sure would be back here.

JUNGE: Oh yeah!

GERINGER: Consider that one of their primary crops would be soybeans and soybeans don't grow west of the 100th meridian. It's too dry – humidity.

JUNGE: I wonder if you'd had 44 inches of rain in Wheatland, if you'd be governor?

GERINGER: I don't know that uh...I have no idea.

SG: He still needed something to keep his mind occupied.

JUNGE: Yeah, I think so. I don't think that weather had that much to do with it. I don't know how far we're going to get through this agenda. I've got so many questions I want to ask you and I think we left off on the first page of four pages that I have as an outline. Yesterday, I was going through at the Archives – I was going through some of your materials. I called up from Archives South a box of your materials on staff meetings and I was going through the minutes of the staff meetings that were held every Monday in your office by your staff and you don't appear on most of them but you did on the first one for 1999. This comes from July 6th, 1999. I just want to read it to you because I just want you to confirm if Carolyn Teter's estimation of their duties is correct here. Whoever took the minutes wrote, "distributed and reviewed governor's office organizational chart because there is a rearrangement of job duties. All staff members have one thing in common – we're here to serve the governor. None of does that independently. Everything we do affects someone else. That's why we have to work as a team. There are two sides of the chart. Administrative and policy. The policy side is that which drives the governor's administration. That which says 'here's the agenda we which wish to accomplish, the legacy we want to leave, the things we want to do in order to accomplish some major goals' Margaret - I assume that's Margaret Spearman and she, meaning Carolyn are the conduits, the sieves, the traffic directors, the work-flow-through. Carolyn requires the support staff – keep her aware of what's going on in the administrative side so that she has the large picture oversight. And the same responsibility goes for Margaret on the policy side – that's why we have Monday staff meetings so everyone is aware of what everyone else is doing that may impact them. We operate by information exchange." And then she goes on with more details. Is that a pretty summary of how the governor's office was run?

GERINGER: It is. The idea that we had was that we would have high level policy that would be tracked and monitored and the of course built according to the goals that we had set for the year. The state-of-the-state address, the most important issues we had to deal with on the policy side -- accounting for the fact that all of the agency directors were also in effect policy people but then the thing that knit them together would be the small group of people in the governor's office. Because I had a very small staff I depended significantly on the agency directors as well where other governors had a policy person that was a counterpart to every cabinet official, which I thought was duplicative and oftentimes created conflict. So the general structure of the governor's office was what does it take to administer the volume of information that comes in -- the calls, scheduling, all those things and Carolyn as the deputy chief of staff was the one who organized that. She was the

“house mom.” She could scold. She could cajole. She was always smiling unless somebody really earned a lecture. The staff was never intimidated by any management practice that we had. That’s not my style. It wasn’t the style of the people in my office. We had a lot of things that built rapport within the office because the hours were long and for those people that had to take calls from the public – many of the administrative staff – especially Christie in scheduling – oftentimes there would be some people who were quite irate – be even-keeled about how to handle that. If they were having a bad day otherwise, it just made that experience worse so we tried to make their day as good as possible. Rita first, well – let’s see – Ken Erickson was chief of staff – Steve Chatterdon, Rita Meyer, Margaret, Rob Wallace for a short while. The chief of staff’s function – particularly the way Rita ran it, she was the chief operating officer for the state where I might be the CEO. The governor’s position is largely executive – you know, the chief executive of the state but you’re an advocate, you’re a spokesperson if you will for the state for all things external to the state whether it be federal matters or working across state boundaries, regional activities or setting a vision for how things needed to be done, setting the vision, providing the advocacy or seeing to the execution of all that. The policy side would be more focused on the vision and the execution for other than the governor’s office was largely by the chief operating officer or the chief of staff in our case -- that would be Rita. Each of them had that role. I’d say Rita and Margaret probably had a clearer idea of what that was when they served in that position and how much it depended on ... an agency director didn’t always want to come to me with a problem -- they wanted to sound somebody else out first. Then that became kind of the buffer to where I didn’t try to solve every little problem -- I let them solve it. The issues that were just too tough to handle came to me. My philosophy was ‘solve the problem at the lowest possible point.’ Probably epitomized by the lingering requirement from the legislature that all out of state travel had to be approved by the governor. When I first experienced this request that came up that said we need your approval for this person to travel out of state, I said, ‘Well, why is it at my desk?’ ‘Well, it’s always been done that way. The governor has to approve it because awhile back the legislature required it.’ I said, ‘How many supervisory people did this particular request pass through before it got to me?’ ‘Five others.’ I said, ‘Go back to the first one. Tell them – they approve or disapprove. If in the end it was a boondoggle, we’ll find out about it and we’ll correct it. If it’s the right thing approve it at the lowest possible level – that’s why they’re there. People were just passing things up to the governor because well, just pass it up to the chain – somebody else can decide. So, there are two things to learn from that. One, you don’t know how to manage and second is there are too many managers. Figure out how which way you want to do this!

JUNGE: It makes so much more sense for you to run your office or run the state like that. It just makes sense.

GERINGER: People work best when they feel motivated that they’re in charge of what they have to do.

SG: Well, the governor doesn’t need to be bothered with “administralia.”

JUNGE: Really. Administralia?

SG: That’s not the best use of his time.

JUNGE: No. Right! One thing I am curious about when I read these staff meeting minutes and especially this part here about policy versus the administrative side is that you had people write policy for you?

GERINGER: Well, we developed policy for instance when I sat down to write the state-of the state or took on some major initiative we would kind of say, “What is it that we’re trying to do?” Things would kind of evolve over time. As far as writing policy, I don’t know that it was written specifically into a policy book. It became embodied into a state of the state address - I pulled one off from the year 2001 because it was as broad as anything as I think I’ve ever covered. So you take each of the major areas and say ‘what are the principles under which we’re going to operate?’ Education/teacher quality was number one– that’s a policy decision. Coupled with that was “let’s have finality to the funding formula so we can finally seek resolution –judicial resolution because the courts were taking far too long to remedy the funding situation so they had to have some certainty there. Those would be policy-type decisions –a policy decision to have community-based services in the least restrictive setting possible – that a policy choice.

JUNGE: But your staff members would have to pretty much know what’s on your mind. They couldn’t just say, “That’s not the governor’s policy to do such and such.” They would have to know your state of mind on each of the issues.

GERINGER: That’s why we had cabinet meetings.

JUNGE: Oh, ok.

SG: He wasn’t abdicating his responsibility as governor to people in his office to make policy. When Jim says “we”, it’s because it was his style of management. He’s not telling you “I” did this. It was –yeah, his idea but they worked together on things.

JUNGE: And from that point, you’d have to trust how they were going to handle things.

GERINGER: Yes. The difference between getting the job done and not – it’s one thing to have a vision and it’s another to have execution and the execution depends largely on how well people understand what is intended. It’s not “I” developed this or “I” developed that. It’s a combination of ideas I picked up, reading I’ve done, thoughts that I’ve had, experiences that have built into a idea that “if we have to change something, how would we change it?” So, policy development –the policy section within the governor’s office was as much as anything help develop it collegially together and then to assure it’s consistency once it’s carried out.

JUNGE: Did any major policy change in a major way from the start of your administration to the end?

GERINGER: Well, let’s see....

JUNGE: I’m thinking of one thing and I can’t think of what it was that you had sort of changed your mind of but you grew into it...I can’t remember what it was.

GERINGER: Well, it comes back to you let me know. If I go through the major categories of what a state becomes or what a governor becomes involved with -- education, of course would be dominant on the list, healthcare, family services, environment, natural resources of all kinds. I would say that energy and environment, while they were almost totally separated typically all across the west in terms of 'here's how we approach energy, here's how we approach environment.' Over time, it became quite obvious that the two were so inter-related and now particularly with the discussion about climate change they're so intertwined that you can't separate them.

JUNGE: You were an environmentalist.

GERINGER: I would say I was as much as a conservationist as anything. I understood conservation. The environment is probably tougher to understand and define. A conservationist is somebody who always leaves something better than they found it.

JUNGE: Well, did that put you in good stead with industry and natural resource industry people?

GERINGER: Well, there were times when -- well...it's hard to say because my characterization of the mineral industry in Wyoming is very few of them were in a decision making capacity to affect policy and I'll use that term intentionally. Because almost all operations in Wyoming and the people who came in to talk to me were those that had a production quota. They had to show something happening and to turn profitability for their shareholders and for the company whereas the decisions on how that was all developed were not made in Wyoming. I would oftentimes encourage them to bring people from the Houston headquarters or Denver or St. Louis or wherever they happened to be headquartered -- so I could understand more about how we could work together. I recall one time when a group of mineral -- this is not on the environment -- this is about how to work with the industry. The folks from the Powder River Basin came in and said that "the freight rates that the railroads are charging are killing us. We just can't sell our coal. We need more margin up here. We need to do something about the freight rates." I thought, "Well, that makes sense because the more coal we move because the more coal we move the more money the state derives from the coal royalties and taxes." So I called in the railroad and particularly Burlington Northern. I said, "Tell me how you set your prices. I'm told that they're just way too high and they're just killing our markets back east." So they went through a scenario of finding out what a major customer's capacity to pay was, what their costs were and what the coal companies could produce. They had a much better economic model as just a conduit of following the coal -- they knew more about the economics of coal than the coal companies did. They knew what they could charge and knew what the market would bear and so they looked at the market at other end and said, they knew what the market will bear, here's our freight rate we'll offer this at the mine mouth and if they take it, that's business. My lesson was, and what I told the coal companies, "You need to understand your markets better. All you're doing is just taking the price at the mine mouth and you want me to negotiate your freight rates. Go get an economist!"

JUNGE: Didn't the DM&E thing start during your administration?

GERINGER: Yeah.

JUNGE: That must have created a real hassle with the UP and the Burlington.

GERINGER: Oh yeah, they used various tactics to try to delay or otherwise thwart the whole idea. The DM & E the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern and it was an alternative route being proposed to haul coal back to the Midwest. The Chicago marketer –that typical area tend to be more competitive. We did need more competition in the freight rates so it wasn't that the railroads were excused – I just thought they had a better economic model than the coal companies. The DM&E was I think a pretty good idea, still is for that matter, but people along the route were concerned about the noise of the trains particularly going through Rochester, Minnesota –the Mayo Clinic. There were environmental considerations. There were landowners who were very upset that we would even consider letting the railroad do that because railroads could exercise eminent domain and chop up the ranchers land so it was a whole potpourri of issue that wouldn't be just one thing. The major competition to that would have been a high voltage dc direct current power line going back to the Midwest. It's a whole lot easier to ship electricity than it is to ship coal and that would have been its chief competitor. Although if we wanted to have more expansion of coal markets we needed to have competition of the railroads – any competition in general.

JUNGE: How much leverage did you have though with say people who transmitted the ...electric transmission people? Did you have any leverage at all?

GERINGER: No, it's a problem that still kind of haunts the state. So much of power line citing depends on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. FERC believes that the states are the greatest impediment to transmission line citing that they could say, "not in my back yard or we want to have our regulations." We took a contrary view and said, "Look how well we work together in the west. Here's our coordination council – Western Electricity Coordinating Council" We have an extraordinary track record in the west for making those things happen but federal pre-emption has always been the preferred option. In fact, the Waxman-Markie bill that's in the Congress right now – we actually litigated and won a court settlement that the states are entitled to do their own and do their own planning and cite lines. So the advocates for the federal approach have persuaded the backers of the climate change bill to pre-empt the states again legislatively.

JUNGE: Don't the western governors have a say-so in this?

GERINGER: Oh, they've had a huge say so. It was true during my administration. It's true during the current ones. Governor Schweitzer of Montana has made that his number one criteria or his initiative if you will as the chair of the Western Governors this coming year. So it continues to be a problem. Back on the issue of the environment -- one of the things we worked very hard to do was to diffuse controversy and I would categorize the environment to include all of natural resources including wildlife, so it would be energy, water, grazing, air quality, water quality, water rights...it's that whole arena. Particularly on difficult to solve issues, we had quite a program that was pioneered in Wyoming called Coordinated Resource Management where people along a given watershed like Muddy Creek All the people who are proponents are opponents of any part of what happened on that whether it be riparian-area grazing or the fact that the femoral streams only flow when it rains and are not always there -- what do you do to maintain that stream habitat? We initiated successfully several CRM's as they were called on all kinds of watersheds so people learned to work together and work out problems on the ground and with each other rather

than through the courts.

JUNGE: Hadn't that been done before?

GERINGER: Not very effectively at all.

JUNGE: Sherri – you had a question.

SG: I was just going to remind him and I think Jim was leading up to it to remind him to talk about his kitchen table discussions with various agencies.

GERINGER: Did we talk about that?

JUNGE: Yeah. A little bit but not much as far as I remember.

GERINGER: I'll talk about that now because that related to the environment but the broader issues of the economy as well. So we had the environment, the economy and community as kind of a three-legged stool -- that was a policy choice that we made early on in my first term. How can we balance each because community has to be part of that? Given that much of the development in Wyoming of the natural resource or even the perfect vision of development had to somehow be understood in context. I was frustrated when environment impact statements would come to my office. They were voluminous. They were on paper. How in the world do you ever go back and pull out something that you know you read somewhere? Now where was it? I yearned for a way to do a digital search, which is so commonplace today, and we couldn't do much of it then. I pushed and pushed to have reports submitted electronically so we could do things like that and it seemed initially to fall on deaf ears because people didn't understand what I was after.

JUNGE: You were ahead of your time Jim.

SG: Typical.

GERINGER: I was struck by the fact that the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the EPA- you could take any number of federal agencies - they all had to have their finger in the pie in an environmental impact statement. They'd all submit separate reports and they would all go out and gather their data independently. I would say, "What's wrong with your people?" And our state agencies, our counterparts --additional agencies where there was no fed equivalent. They would do their own. The Game and Fish would seek their own data; the agricultural people would seek their own data. There's got to be some common baseline. Data is data. Data is what you gather to determine what the situation is and then you turn that into information using whatever analytical tools and science based approaches and that let the science speak and then you apply values in the end. Why can't you at least get together and have a common approach to gathering the data, providing the information, discussing it across your agencies and then present one report obviously outlining where each of you have your differences. And if your going to have a state position then let's all of our state agencies get together and wrangle this out and decide what the Wyoming state position is. Well that created tremendous controversy. "The governor is going to tell the Game and Fish what to do!" Or the Department of Transportation. I said, no. If Wyoming

is going to speak together as an entity for these types of development, how do we pull them all together? And it was at times a very bitter controversy where I was accused of all kinds of manipulation. Not true of course but the goal was to have a consistent voice because the federal agencies were saying the Game and Fish says this, the Department of Transportation says that, Agriculture says that – “We’ll pick the one we most agree with.” Well, where does Wyoming end up? We had to have some way of reconciling all that. I asked the question, “Why don’t you go after the same data?” “Well, we don’t know how to meet together. And under the Federal Advisory Committee, we can’t -- as Federal Agencies meet together without certain criteria being met.” Well, I did the unthinkable thing and I went and read the law that set up FACA and found out that in effect the governor could convene them and they wouldn’t have to go through all of that red tape or, I guess, stifling requirement. FACA is a good law and is intended to engage the public in a very meaningful way but it was being misused as a way of avoiding meeting at all or coordinating across boundaries. So, I said, “Why don’t you all just come to our house?” Actually it turned out to be a bit...well, I guess we did meet at the house the first year...

SG: The first one, yeah.

GERINGER: Yeah. I was...the way I set the meeting up was, I recall back on the farm, especially any place in rural Wyoming when a neighbor or a group of people decides something needs to be done, you’re driving down a country road and you run into somebody you needed to talk to, you pull over to the side of the road and you talk or...let’s say up in Wheatland, I’d be standing out in the yard doing something and a neighbor would drive by, he’d pull into the yard and we’d chat over the hood of the car or just as often go into the kitchen, sit down at the kitchen table and have a cup of coffee and what you decided across the kitchen table was your word. That’s how you reacted from then on. I wonder if State Agencies could meet across the kitchen table because if you think of how we interact socially, not taking into account social networking and Twittering and all those things – when people are reacting one on one in a social environment – go to somebody’s house for an evening, say a relatively large gathering of people...where do people end up? In the kitchen. There’s something disarming about being in the kitchen where you’re open, you’re conversational and the commitments you make are binding. That’s just the way human nature works. We built that concept into the governor’s “kitchen table conference.” So every spring about May, I would chair the meeting-- it was a full day and a half. We would select a very hot topic in advance like endangered species. Instead of going after each specie individually to prepare a plan - we know that there are multiple species in a given area that each have a habitat requirement, each have criteria that need to be met. Why don’t we look at them in totality in the context of that habitat? Or, regional air quality -- what is the real impact on Wyoming’s air quality? Is it our own generation or is it migrating across borders? That definitely took a regional approach as well as having to have the Feds come in. We had the Secretary of the Interior one time; we had the EPA director another time. We had the regional foresters – at one time, three different regions because Wyoming has parts of three different regional U.S. forests. I always picked one federal counterpart to co-chair with me and we’d conduct the meeting on a very key issue of the day but then spend the second day not only toting up the things we were going to do and take action on, we’d break the group up into four or five regions of Wyoming, because Wyoming is not a single entity in terms of impact. So a Southwest group would meet and they’d talk about issues that needed to be brought up and if there were significant enough they’d be brought to the whole group the following year. We developed a rapport in getting things done that I think had been

unprecedented and I think is still without precedent as far as getting people to work together. We developed technology which is what drew me into geographic information systems, the job I currently hold. One of the key technologies that was needed was what they refer to as a common base map. Well, to me, a map is a map. What do you mean you can't share data because you don't have a common base map? Just go get one. I didn't realize how difficult that was. Isn't data data? No, it's in different formats and our programs read them in different ways and if we don't have standards for how we gather the data in the format that it's in, we can't exchange that data. So, it became quite a ...I don't know what you call it. The vision was, "how do you come up with a more cohesive plan that takes all concerns into account and hammers out the best possible solution – one that will actually move forward? Because what was happening, as each decision was made, somebody would litigate it. Why not anticipate all of the things that need to be resolved ahead of time so litigation was minimized and yet the goals that people had would be maximized? No one was going to win everything. Consensus in a general sense is getting the best you can for most everyone involved. You take everyone into account – you don't exclude anybody. And that model – gosh, we did that for all eight years I was in office and it was very successful.

JUNGE: How often did you meet?

GERINGER: Once a year but a lot of preparation went into each meeting because people knew that they'd have to stand up among their peers and defend what they were doing.

JUNGE: Why didn't you continue to have them at your house?

GERINGER: They got too big.

JUNGE: Oh really? These things grew? So, where did you have them, in the capitol?

GERINGER: Well, we had one at the old Union Pacific Depot – we met there a couple of times. We met in the Herschler Building, at the Capitol and three or four years, we met out at Warren Air Force Base at the officer's club. It was just a large enough meeting room and had good support facilities.

JUNGE: Are they still being held?

GERINGER: No.

JUNGE: Do you still think it would be helpful to continue them?

GERINGER: Oh, I do. I think it's a matter of executive prerogative.

JUNGE: Yeah, and the way people handle their administration.

GERINGER: I believed in trying to be in front of an issue, not just waiting something happened and then take action.

JUNGE: Well, the whole approach bespeaks your mechanical engineering background – you

gather the stuff, you look at it, you evaluate and decide what the problem might be and come up with some practical solutions.

GERINGER: I could be driven by the goals that I wanted out of all of the issues that could be brought to the table. For instance, we wanted to have economic growth, we wanted to have the right kind of legacy for the environment. We wanted to have communities that were taken into account – you didn't just stick something in their face as the Feds were doing and say, "you'll have to live with this." The West is so dominated by federal ownership of surface land and subsurface minerals that how a community grew or developed was not even taken into account. Decisions were made so arbitrarily and oftentimes it was said, "Well, we manage these lands for all the people of the U.S. and not just for your own communities." I said, "Well, the communities are the first ones impacted."

JUNGE: Yeah, but it seems to me like the officials ---when I worked for the state the officials in the various federal agencies had to maintain offices here and you'd think they'd become acculturated to some extent and understand that the point of view of the people in the state, the state's writers for example was different from the stuff they were getting down the pipeline in Washington, D.C.

GERINGER: Except that many of them were also looking for ways to please up people up the line and on into Washington. I'd say though just as when I first started convening our various state agencies such as the meeting on workforce development where the people in the community colleges, Department of Employment, Family Services had not ever even met. They all are running workforce service programs or vocational education but they'd never met – they'd never worked together. You'd think they'd be acclimated or acculturated to the people they shared as neighbors but they didn't really. They never thought of it in terms of ...they almost totally separated what they had as a job with what they did in their community. By bringing them together and people who were at times very adversarial. I went around the room consistently at the start of each meeting because there would be new people in the room. I'd say, "Give me a quick run down of who you are, where you're from, what your background is, your education and what are the key things that drew you into this job." And wow. It was just amazing at how consistent people were in their ideals, their goals. People who thought they were at loggerheads discovered they had common backgrounds. In many ways, they had common goals. Once they discovered that, they became real people talking not just employees working across artificial boundaries.

JUNGE: And you became in that case a facilitator, right?

GERINGER: I was as much a facilitator but the key to chairing the meeting was not just to facilitate so they could all get along; it was driving them to an outcome. And I'd make it clear the things that I thought were important and we'd contend over that. We'd alter how I might go about it so it wasn't insisting on my way. It was me putting something on the table that we could react to. In turn, they were entitled to do the same thing.

JUNGE: And when you saw a glitch or saw a problem, you made a comment.

GERINGER: Yeah, so that difficult situations could be diffused or if we had inadequate

information, how could we get it? If southwest air quality was impinged or degraded because of migration from the west coast which we had a thought it might be and until we lined up the University of King that does atmospheric research -- the King Air aircraft -- and flew the borders -- flew outside the borders and flew inside the borders and documented the migration of pollutants that were coming from outside the state.

JUNGE: Really, they came all the way from San Bernadino and Riverside?

GERINGER: Probably so. It was external to the State of Wyoming. The most likely candidate was the Los Angeles region, metropolitan region.

JUNGE: So you had the King Airs flown? Is that what you suggested?

GERINGER: Well, we would say, "What are our resources?" That was one of the resources that could be brought to bear was a tool from the University of Wyoming. How could we engage them? What would it take to pay for it? That type of thing.

JUNGE: What was your conclusion?

GERINGER: That we were being restricted in our development because of air quality problems caused not by us, but by someone else. So, Wyoming air quality was being criticized by federal managers as not meeting standard therefore we could not develop agriculture, minerals, energy, whatever we wanted to do because it was contributing to the decline in air quality in Wyoming. We said, "Let's take a better look. What if it's not something caused by us -- if it's migrating from other places?" Some of it was from Salt Lake. Well, it's in a bowl. A lot of that ugly cloud...when the wind finally does blow it migrates and it usually migrates toward Wyoming.

JUNGE: But that puts you into opposition in a way with the Western governors of Utah and California who said well, we've got our own agenda on it.

GERINGER: Well, it's broader than that. The Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission, which I joined late -- Governor Leavitt pretty much lead that but Wyoming had a major role in it.

JUNGE: From Utah?

GERINGER: Governor Leavitt from Utah. The outcome as it was headed when I took office -- it was called the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission because the Grand Canyon's visibility was declining. The haze was so bad that the experience of looking across that grand canyon needed to be improved -- what was the source of it? Well, they thought it was the four corners -- the four states that come together in the corners, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado -- the four corners power plants. "Well, that's the Navajos. We've got to get the Native Americans involved. They've got to clean up their air! Well, they're generating power for Los Angeles. Maybe we ought to talk..." Well, the upshot of it was as they started what was called the Western Region Air Partnership they discovered that the number one cause of visibility degradation was the Bureau of Land Management's burning policy. They would burn certain area of the prairie or BLM land to improve vegetation and habitat -- that that burning had introduced particulate that

became part of the problem. So the number one contributor to the degradation wasn't power plants it was the Federal policy of burning. They also came up with criteria that said "The best way to improve quality is to improve quantity. So if we have higher quantity of good air mixed with bad air, the end result is acceptable air." There are only two states that can significantly contribute to the higher volume of clean air – Nevada and Wyoming. So, they came up with the bright idea – "Why don't we just restrict growth in Wyoming and Nevada and that will solve the problem?" I objected. I said, "That's a bad idea!" We had to fight that issue for over a year. I don't know if it's still going on. That's how ludicrous some of the Federal choices can be when you have 4,000 people whose combined wisdom could be maybe put into one person and could do a better job.

JUNGE: No wonder the Western governors are such "state's righters." I marvel at the current Governor Dave Freudenthal's position vis a vie the wolf issue. It's almost like it is out of proportion to the importance of the issue. I mean you see so much on it. Just like you probably saw a lot on the prebble's jumping mouse.

GERINGER: Oh, I saw the wolf first.

JUNGE: Did you?

GERINGER: Yeah. Bruce Babbit decided that they had to have wolves in western America. They weren't the kind that they thought would be the right kind so they went up to Canada and got the Canada gray wolf, which in effect is an invasive species and brought them down to Wyoming. Turned them loose in Yellowstone Park. Didn't even call. Didn't even give me the courtesy of a phone call saying they were going to bring the wolves down. This is a situation where it's probably good that I didn't know then what I do know now or I probably would have used the principal of "Shoot, shovel and shut up." If you're going to work out something that has a noble goal of say reconstituting an endangered species then let's go about it in the right way. So the reintroduction of a wolf that wasn't even native to Wyoming under circumstances that weren't even collaborative at all – there was no attempt to be collaborative at all. And, when we objected, they said, "We will absolutely guarantee that they will never leave Yellowstone Park. You'll never have to worry about wolves coming out and disturbing the ranchers, the sheep or the cattle or the wildlife." I said, "Well, I'm counting on that because if they do exit, you can come pick up the wolf or you can come pick up the carcass." Well, then that stirred up a bunch of controversy. Part of what I'd comment on there was there were groups of people like the Defenders of Wildlife who was one of the worst at the time – now they've become much better -- – the Sierra Club and others who took a contrary view to what the State was trying to do. When I tried to work with them, they oftentimes...well, how shall I characterize it. They realized as a tactical matter that if they'd cooperated with the entity or the person that they had set up as the adversary or the enemy – if they collaborated in any to work out an amenable solution, they lost their leverage for fund raising. That so irritated me that people could be that disingenuous – they claimed to have a noble goal but their goal was to raise money to perpetuate the organization, not the furtherance of the wildlife. To me, that's a lack of ethics. I think both of those entities have changed somewhat but it's probably true of any number of non-governmental organizations who if they appear to be working out the problem that is their primary fund raising issue then what do they do? They have to go out and find another issue, which they should do anyway if they are doing the right thing but just to arbitrarily say "we have to fight this thing because if we cooperate or we'll lose our edge."

JUNGE: Well, it wasn't the issue I gather by the tone of your talk here..it wasn't just the issue of the wolves, it was how it was handled.

GERINGER: Oh, very much so. It was just rammed down our throats. So, we stepped back and when the legislature passed a law that was in effect going to run the wolves out. I brought them down and they worked with Bill Hill, the Attorney General. I didn't know which way this should come out. We bent over backward trying to accommodate them taking their word that they would not stray out of any of their own territory.

JUNGE: You mean the NPS of the Department of the Interior?

GERINGER: Department of the Interior because the Fish and Wildlife Service was the one that was ostensibly in charge but Bruce Babbitt as the Director of Interior was the one who as a matter of policy was going to make sure it all got done. So, we said, ok – we'll play by the rules. Do what we can to allow the management, we'll set up all these processes, we'll cooperate. It seemed like it was always an afterthought on how the State was included. Nonetheless, we made a lot of progress. Of course, the record is there that wolf packs developed. They spread considerably and they spread far beyond what anybody ever imagined. Of course, that's the legacy of how you manage wolves today. Wyoming has its criteria. There will be zones where – I don't remember what the current category is – it's not threatened or endangered – it's a specie that's under management. Then there's areas where it's a predator. I don't see a thing wrong with that. It think Wyoming good law.

JUNGE: So do you think Babbitt was afraid of or knew darn well what you were going to say so there was no sense in talking to you?

GERINGER: It's hard to tell. You know a guy who cut his teeth on the West, grew up in the West, has a rich history in the West and was governor of a Western State, you'd have thought he have thought more like a Westerner. Something seemed to happen when he went inside the beltway. "You just can't trust those uneducated people in the West." He treated us so uncivilly. Like we just didn't understand the nature of things.

JUNGE: This isn't accusatory, but you used this in your campaign against Kathy Karpan, that she was a friend of Babbitts, a supporter of Babbitts. You know, I noticed that you were not afraid to attack people at their weak spots.

GERINGER: There's tactics that you use and tactics that you don't.

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JUNGE: Going back to your...I was reminded of something when you were talking about Muddy Creek. I'm wondering how did you and Ben Nelson, Governor of Nebraska get along on that North Platte issue?

GERINGER: Ben was a good guy; a good guy to work with but whoever got to him last

influenced his decision. His director of resources and his state engineer tended to have the last word and ...I don't know how to characterize it...We had personal negotiations on more than one situation and Ben being a lawyer understood the terminologies said, 'We have a wrap' meaning "we have wrapped this up" like shaking hands at the kitchen table. In legalize, "we have come to the point where professionally we agree, this is settled" and we settled the North Platte with that kind of session at least twice, Ben and me, only to have him turned around when he got back to Lincoln or if we met in Lincoln when I got back to Cheyenne. So it continued to drag on. We finally settled it with his successor Mike Johanns and the difficult part there was it wasn't settled between the governors. We brought a resolution to a special master who had been appointed by the Supreme Court. And the special master was key by position but he was not key in terms of overall wisdom. I did not respect the capability of the individual but he was the one who got to make the choice.

JUNGE: Who was it?

GERINGER: I don't recall his name. That put way too much authority into one person's hands who seldom worked more than two or three hours a day and just relied on people to bring him information and he would make decisions. So I perhaps might be characterizing him unfairly but I'd say my opinion stands. He had more to do with the settlement than the....Oh, I took a lickin' by a lot of people about how we gave water away and I don't agree with that. We got the best possible solution given the circumstances especially with the special master. Ben was willing to work on it but he wasn't always willing to carry it out. I told the story once about an individual had died and gone to heaven and he ran into St. Peter after he had checked in at the Pearly Gates. His name was certified after he could be there and he got to wandering around and it was just a great place. He went up to St. Peter and said, "You know, I've always wondered what hell would have been like. Is there any chance that I could have an understanding of what it was." St. Peter said, "Sure, go over to that portico over there and look down into the valley of the shadow of death where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth and brimstone and all that. You'll see what it was like." So, the individual walked over there and he looked down and thought, "Boy, I must be in the wrong place -this is a beautiful, green, verdant valley. The people are just striving; everything is just wonderful down there. They're raising crops and they're enjoying life!" So, he went back to St. Peter and said, "I think I went to the wrong place. I went to that portico over there and I looked down to see what hell was like." St. Peter said, "Yeah, that was the place." So, he described what he had seen and St. Peter said, "Oh those damn Nebraskans! They're stealing water again!"

JUNGE: I thought you were going to say something about the Mormons....

GERINGER: No, I told that story at a Western Governor's meeting and the room just collapsed in laughter and Ben Nelson, he was just speechless.

JUNGE: Now that you've talked about the mechanics and I really appreciate the interaction between you and Ben Nelson but what was the issue?

GERINGER: There were several issues. One of the key issues we were contending over was Nebraska was using ground water wells, the wells that were in essence in the streambed aquifer of the North Platte. So, they were pumping water out of water wells. I think they categorized

differently that the water flowing in the riverbed.

JUNGE: Was that the Ogallala aquifer?

GERINGER: No, it wasn't that aquifer at all. If you have a streambed, the water you see on the surface is only a portion of all the water in that streambed. A lot of it is subsurface. As you pull water away from underground, it causes surface water to percolate into that gravel bed or whatever condition the soil is. So, if you have that kind of hydrologic connection then as you pump water from these wells that are adjacent to the river, you're in essence taking water out of the river. Nebraska would not regulate their ground water wells. Wyoming did. Wyoming recognized hydrologic connection. We had water that had to be...we had so many different segments on the North Platte – the upper North Platte, the main stem, the tributaries, compacts and decrees that had been established, mostly court decrees on the North Platte exempted the main tributaries from regulation but the North Platte itself had to be considered. Well, there were limitations on that and then of course, Basin Electric, when they built their power plant, they arbitrarily on their own agreed to provide 5,000 acre feet a year to sustain a whooping crane habitat down in Nebraska that the State Engineer never agreed to and so he took it off the allocation of their water right. There were all these things that intermeshed but the principle disagreement with Nebraska was over hydrologic connection of ground water and surface water that they failed to recognize. But then of course endangered species came into it –the North Platte Settlement included...how the North and the South Platte would be managed so Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska all had to participate. So there wasn't one single issue. But it was how do you calculate the allocation that Nebraska is entitled to 75% of the water in the North Platte coming out of Wyoming?

JUNGE: Well, Elwood Mead, I think, was the person who had so much to do with establishing the water law way back when for whom Lake Mead is named. I think it was called "beneficial use" or "right of prior appropriation" or something like that. But it was first come, first serve in Wyoming.

GERINGER: Yes. The Doctrine of Prior Appropriation. First in use, first in time and right.

JUNGE: Ok. Did Nebraska have anything like that?

GERINGER: Basically. Yeah. It's pretty much western water law. Wyoming's water law is somewhat unique in that the water is owned by the state but it is a water right a pertinent to the land so it becomes an actual physical right in terms of being attached to the land where it is put to beneficial use but it is not something that can be bought and sold as they do in Colorado.

JUNGE: How did you feel about separating that up to a certain point in time?

GERINGER: I didn't. I never did support it. I did not agree with buying and selling the water rights. In fact even some of the current activity where Basin Electric has purchased water from the Wheatland Irrigation District I think goes above and beyond what the historical intent was to assure that water would always be available for the widest possible use including agriculture.

JUNGE: But you're going to make some ranchers mad who maybe could benefit by selling their water.

GERINGER: Well, they don't own the water. They own the right to use it.

JUNGE: And you were afraid of what would happen to the whole state.

GERINGER: Well, if they start negotiating to sell off water rights, probably the biggest impact today would be what's happening on the Colorado River, which is over appropriated down below. There's the upper Colorado, the lower Colorado. And the upper basin states including Wyoming have never sold their full allocation. If we start selling the right to use water whether it be on an annual basis to Las Vegas or permanently to the front range of Colorado, you in essence cause a dependence to come in to play. Yes, I only contracted to sell water for one year, two years, or five years but once you create a dependency on that water, the courts would be loathe to sever that dependency and at that point say, "You're no longer entitled to take payment because you have demonstrated that you have no need for the water."

JUNGE: Why don't we just build more reservoirs and sell our water to Arizona and California?

GERINGER: Oh, I'm sure people have thought about that but it's like selling your birthright.

JUNGE: But we can't sell it to them if we don't have it. You're talking again about a long-term agreement?

GERINGER: I'm saying that we should develop it for our own use in Wyoming. Under the allocation of almost all streams coming out of Wyoming, we already export the vast majority of our water to people who have a senior right but of the water that's left in the North Platte—what we call Division 1 in Southeast Wyoming – southeast is so over appropriated that we kind of have to give and take depending on the water year but other places like southwest -- why not develop more of the water for beneficial use in Wyoming. It's ours but being exported right now.

JUNGE: We're jumping ahead here but I'd like to know what you think about the proposal from private industry to ship Green River over the Continental Divide down into Colorado.

GERINGER: I think it's mercenary. I think it's a bad idea. Because it means in essence...see what will happen is. they're going to take it out of a reservoir under Federal authority so it would not be water that Wyoming has any say over and then ship it over there. The danger of that is the Secretary of the Interior gets to determine what the upper basin and lower basin allocation is every year. So, let's say that you're going to divert out of the Fontanelle or whatever..out of the Green and then ship it over to the Front Range. Now that lowers the amount of water going on down stream where it's already over appropriated -- San Diego, Los Angeles, Phoenix....the Central Arizona project, that Phoenix takes a huge amount of Colorado River water and uses a lot of electricity to pump it over a ridge to get down into Phoenix so they can aerate golf courses andstuff.

JUNGE: What's that?

SG: Swimming pools.

JUNGE: That's right.

GERINGER: So the upshot of that is that if they still need more water than they're getting and the upper basin and the lower basin split is determined at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. If you divert from Fontanelle, now you have less going downstream so the Secretary might just decide, "Well, since you're not using it in the upper basin states we'll just go ahead and allocate it to the lower basin" and then set a precedent.

JUNGE: That puts you in a really tough position as governor

GERINGER: The only place you can build another dam to hold that water is on federal land.

JUNGE: Oh man. How complicated! I remember one time --was Jeff Fassett engineer when you were Governor?

GERINGER: Yes. Jeff Fassett. George Costopolous and then Pat Tyrrell.

JUNGE: I remember asking Jeff Fassett to talk to my Wyoming History class when I taught at LCCC one year. He came in and students were..you know how they are. They were reluctant to ask questions because they don't know much about the topic. If they knew more about the topic, their hands would just be shooting up..I would think. I said, "Let me ask a question, Jeff. Why don't we just build reservoirs, store our water and sell it?" He said, "California could buy Wyoming lock, stock and barrel. All they would have to do is claim that their water is being shut off and they'll do it through something like the whooping crane issue and it's endangering a species to do so they'd hold us up in court for as long as they want to." Is that so?

GERINGER: Yes. Water litigation is never expedient. Litigation like that or litigation over mineral development or over a lot of things --there's always one party that is at a disadvantage because they have a dependency on what's being litigated so time is on the side of the person who has no direct stake in the game. They might have a principle involved that they wish to establish but they're not going to be affected. So, for instance when it comes to mineral development the longer you delay something the less economical it becomes because you've tied up people's capability to invest or recoup a return on that investment. That might be true of transmission lines, which transmit electric renewable energy out of the western states. Yet if people don't want a transmission line across a particular region, they can object on environmental or endangered species grounds -- tie it up in court and you lose certainty for investment in that power line. That's a very effective tactic.

JUNGE: Is that what was involved in the Kennetech negotiation?

GERINGER: Kennetech? I thought they were clean coal.

JUNGE: That's probably my mistake. Well, we've done it again...zipped off the path here....

GERINGER: What was your question?

JUNGE: I have no idea!

GERINGER: Reading through the staff minutes gives an insight into how the governor's office was run. I guess my observation would be..the process of governing is important -- that's the administrative or as we call it the "administrivia." But there always has to be a broader view of the purpose. Purpose should prevail over process but government is not good at that Government becomes so enamored with its process whether it be "we've always done it that way", or "these are the regulations" or "I have to check your compliance." So the way we tried to run the governor's office was the administrative side of things took all of the constituent requests, the scheduling requests, anything that came in that had to do with handling the volume of mail; having to deal with the anthrax scare. We had two people who...Of course, the capitol wasn't air-conditioned. One day, it must have been in August...I can't remember what month it was. The people up front were going through the day's mail. We had a couple of large fans blowing to cool the air and keep the comfort level a little bit higher. Was it Natasha? Natasha opened an envelope and a bunch of white powder came out and of course the fans picked it up. There were two or three people in the room and that was just after the anthrax scare and white power could come it -- terrifying. So, we had to shut the capitol down and we had to shut the office down and call in the hazmat crews to come and decontaminate people as well as do an assessment as to what was going on because the people's lives were at risk potentially. Those were the people who, while they might have the designation as a staff person on the administrative side, were as much exposed as the governor in many ways; they were always very special people. So I would never detract from the job that they did. What I would take issue with and with my comment about process and purpose is related to how government tends to stifle itself sometimes by becoming too process oriented but the people that were involved were just amazing. We had great people. We also made an effort to hire people who were disabled or were at a disadvantage somehow so that there would be an exposure of what disabilities in the workplace would be like plus to encourage them to get involved so we always asked for people to come over and work. We had the Governor's Fellowship program too where I would ask the state agencies to nominate an upcoming star in their organization to come over and spend a year working in the Governor's Office.

JUNGE: Is that the Fellowship Program?

GERINGER: Yes. That Fellow's program several times resulted in the person recognized for having a broader perspective, how to see things in context, how to being better equipped to be moved up into management within an organization. It was great!

JUNGE: Besides them, were there people within your organization that showed a capacity to grow? I can think of one.

GERINGER: Well, a couple of them. One of them is the State Auditor and one is US State Representative.

JUNGE: Well, I wasn't going to mention Lummis -- I forgot about her, but Rita Meyer certainly.

GERINGER: Yeah, Rita Meyer's done extraordinarily well.

SG: Jimmy Orr.

GERINGER: Yeah. Jimmy went to...he was White House communications director for the website under the Bush Administration. Remember Barney the Dog and the Barneycam?

JUNGE: I'm not sure.

GERINGER: Barney was a black dog..was it a spaniel...cocker...scotty...I don't know what he was..a black dog.

SG: Bush's pet.

GERINGER: Jimmy came up with the idea one day, "Why don't we put a video cam on Barney and just track him around the White House? It'd be something to put on the web page." Well, everybody loved it. So they said, "Let's do it." But the camera kept falling underneath. It wouldn't stay put! They had touted it and hyped it so much so that it was going to be on the website so they had to do something. So, they put the collar on Jimmy and he ran around chasing Barney on his hands and knees.

SG: Since it was his idea!

GERINGER: Jimmy went off to work for Governor Schwarzenegger for awhile and now he's the online blog editor for the Christian Science Monitor.

JUNGE: Which is pretty prestigious. Did you read it?

GERINGER: You mean while I was in office? On occasion. In fact, I even did a couple of articles for them after I left office on policy consensus initiative and what it takes build consensus to govern better. I don't remember. I suppose I read a variety of publications but as much as anything Jimmy would do press clippings and have them available for me when I came into the office on any given day.

JUNGE: This is just curious. Did you have time to read like the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal?

GERINGER: I think the Journal was probably the most consistent thing I've read just to see what the business and economic trends would be.

SG: He had so much other stuff to read that to read the popular press as it were, he just didn't have that much time. That's why if somebody would pick an article for him --and give him a copy of him...somebody on the staff--that was pertinent to the issues of the day....

GERINGER: That was Jimmy's job every morning was to pull anything together that were the hot topics. What was being said, what was not being said, what's the reaction, what are the editorials? There was a smattering-- a kind of cross-section so we could kind of our finger on the pulse. The

best way to keep our finger on the pulse was to travel around the state. People are never bashful.

SG: Jimmy made a point though of not reading the state press or watching state tv because he didn't want to get down in the weeds with the controversies that were going on.

GERINGER: Qualified by the fact that we always had the clippings as well.

SG: Right. Other people in the office knew what was going on but just to give an overview but not to...

GERINGER: It's very easy for a governor to become consumed by the "crisis de jour" -- the hot topic of the day that you lose track of what you're trying to do overall so if you just become the daily crisis manager you don't move an agenda forward. You have to have the vision to look beyond what is happening today and other crisis that had to be taken care of -- the drought, forest fires or the Matthew Shepard murder -- any of those things that came up. You had to deal with them. But on lesser issues, there could be a very easy slipping into just trying to manage the hot topics and trying to diffuse any criticism that's going on rather than saying, "I've got to be consistent." Here's the consistency that 's going to matter over the next year. What needs to be in place to make this goal achievable? My goal was to increase employment every year I was in office, which we did. Well, I didn't make it happen but I sure...enough attention was given to it that the combination of several things resulted in it happening even in some difficult times.

JUNGE: It's a good thing you weren't ADD or you would have fallen right into that.

GERINGER: Is that what happens? Everything's a crisis?

JUNGE: When I was in state government, I was appalled at what I had to read. I had to read similar documents to what you had to read. It stunts my creativity. It stunts my ability to express myself. It's so hard to read this stuff. How did you manage to read all this dry as dust material?

GERINGER: I wouldn't call it speed-reading but I'd say I would glance through any number of articles. In fact that's how I kept up with a lot of things on the new economy, on technology, on trends. For instance on community-based care -- any number of publications. The office received I don't know how many different publications from the Economist to Consumer Reports. You never knew what was going to come across. So you kind of get a flavor of trends that are out there so that was probably more of what I would do and then when I needed something more in depth I could pursue that. Especially trying to keep up with the advances in technology. What we realized early on that became very difficult to communicate but now is commonplace was that the traditional style of creating jobs was not the way Wyoming needed to go. We needed to take advantage of what we call "the knowledge-based" economy. It's what people could do and know and provide as a service. I said, "We need to move toward a high-end services-based economy and it's not up to me to decide how that happens." Well, that service-oriented economy even pertained to things like mineral development, because as technology made it easier to extract that energy with a lower number of jobs then you had to be aware that you had to have more highly trained people to go into that. So, for instance, one young lad over in Sweetwater County -- his teachers worked very hard to get him through the courses so that he would pass and finally graduate high

school. He got a job in the trona mines and this was back eight years ago. So relatively speaking his starting wage was \$44,000 a year. One of his strongest advocates, a senior teacher who helped nurture him through at the top of her pay scale at \$38,000. Her comment to me when she was taking pride in his achievement was, "Where's the fairness in this?" I said, "That's a good point!" What can we do to enhance the value on the education in Wyoming? Part of my disagreement was with the teacher's union who said "everyone has to be paid the same" and "everything is on tenure and time" and not based on quality and capability. I advocated for quite awhile for differentiated pay and it just didn't catch hold.

JUNGE: Were you in favor of "No Child Left Behind?"

GERINGER: The law, the principle or all of the above?

JUNGE: I guess the policy...because I don't want to get too much in to the technical aspect of this. I talked to a teacher about this. She's a master teacher as far as I'm concerned. I don't think she has that technical appellation but she's the best friend of my wife who was also a teacher for 30 years. I said, "What do you think, Mary about 'No Child Left Behind?' Do you think teachers ought to be evaluated according to the performance of their students and if they do well with their students that they ought to get increases and rewards? She kind of looked around and said, "Sure. As long as you let me pick my students." To me, it said a lot. If all teachers are evaluated on the way students come out on their tests or perform, then perhaps we ought to let them do what we used to do as Junior Babe Ruth coaches. We'd draft them out of Little League and say "I'll take him, I'll take him.Or her." I guess you see my point.

GERINGER: That's not what "No Child Left Behind" did. The main principle was that every child should be able to be proficient in whatever standards we set for academic achievement. It's overall principle was correct. It's execution, particularly being administered at the Federal level was incorrect because education is a primary responsibility of the state, not the Federal government. The Federal Government only participates to the extent of about 7% of the funding on all money spent on K-12 education. So in the context of responsibility, the states are the ones who are the ones paying for it, the Feds by the way they write the criteria for some very tough areas, incentivized the states to go by their regulations so anywhere from 50-70% of the paperwork involved in documenting what you're doing in the schools was to satisfy only 7% of the funding but it was in critical areas such as children with disabilities or Title 1 – special needs kids. Now the whole concept of 'every child should be given the opportunity to learn to their full potential' is the nub of the No Child Left Behind. So, it's appropriately titled. Don't leave kids behind just because you've decided they can't learn. Figure out what they're capable of learning and then help them. I'll never forget a student who could only communicate by how he tapped his head on a touch-sensitive pad to manipulate a computer cursor so he communicate and talk to me in one of the high schools. He had a brilliant mind but he was trapped inside an inability to communicate and as the technology evolved...he was not to the point of being Stephen Hawking but there are some gems out there. So why should we decide not to do something for them. That's probably one of the more extremes but there are children who learn at various levels. My thought would be....in fact, I called attention to the fact on No Child Left Behind...the easy part is to find those students that you'd mentioned where you can recruit and bring them into the classroom and they'll always excel. What we want to do is measure the value added with each teacher. Not by how well the

student has done on a test. So let's say you're a 10th grade teacher and a student comes into your class and has learned up to the 7th grade level and by the time that student graduates that student has achieved at the 9th grade level, they've moved two years in one year in your class. Well, are they proficient at 10th grade level? No. Then that's the wrong way to evaluate. So I believed a lot more what I would say is the value-added approach than just simple scoring on a test. One of the ways that can be taken advantage of was through technology where technology as I advocated then and I think still pertains today. Technology allows you to do differentiated instruction so you can deal with each child individually. The handheld devices where you can track how a student is doing that is transmitted to your desktop computer so you can keep track of a child's reading progress, math progress, whatever it is. What do they need? What has been tried? How do you document that? You finally build a record of student progress over time, not just a snapshot on a test.

JUNGE: One of the big criticisms of the No Child Left Behind is that too much time is spent teaching to the test.

GERINGER: No Child Left Behind didn't establish the test. No Child Left Behind said the student had to be proficient and that you have to have a fully qualified teacher in front of every class. The states implement by saying that must mean we must have these standardized tests.

JUNGE: PAWS?

GERINGER: It was WYCAS at the time.

JUNGE: So, the glitch came in with the states?

GERINGER: The states were told that if they didn't implement No Child Left Behind they would lose 10% of the administrative portion of the federal funds. The cost was insignificant. If a state didn't want to implement No Child Left Behind, there was no major impact. They used it as an excuse to say, "Well, we're being forced to do it, so we're going to do it. States could have opted out. If there was that much ill will about NO Child Left Behind, any one state could have opted out – I think Utah started to at one time. So the characterization that the Feds were mandating it was more or less phony because states could have opted out but they would have lost some money – kind of like the Federal highway incentives but the Federal highway incentives were a lot more powerful than what was going to be withheld by the Feds. See what would have happened was, if you take some money out of Title I, which is very much federally funded as a segmented program within the schools and that impacts a very special group of kids. Well, our principle in my office was, if a program is important enough that they're willing to receive federal funds it should be important enough that if the federal funds go away we will still sustain it. Otherwise, turn the Feds down. I lost that battle over time. If we lost so much of the Title I funding from education and it was still important to teach our kids put the money on the table and teach the kids anyway. In fact, as a contrarian in the legislature when I carried raising the drinking age to 21, I said we should not be blackmailed into passing this law. I propose that you pass the bill raising the drinking to 21 for the merits of the bill and tell the Feds to keep their money anyway. I said, "Turn it down."

JUNGE: And the result?

GERINGER: I lost.

JUNGE: (To Sherri) Did you have any input into this whole educational problem that Jim had to wrangle with? Did you play a part in that?

SG: No, I didn't. That was policy and I didn't get into policy in the Governor's Office.

JUNGE: Ok, well. You raised 5 kids and 10 grandkids. What was your opinion?

SG: I think every parent knows who the good teachers are in the school and who they aren't. But we intentionally did not request certain teachers for our children except in very unusual circumstances. I think of our five children, only twice did we ever request a teacher and it was only for a very specific reason. We felt like it is incumbent upon the children to learn. We would encourage them and help them at home if they had a teacher who was not teaching at the level that we felt like the kids should be learning. I think parents have a responsibility as well and we see a lot of that lacking in schools.

GERINGER: The whole concept of adding value to a student can be differentiated between what is added by the classroom setting including the teacher and what's added by the student and the community. The classroom and the teacher -- the teacher singularly is the most important factor, greater than any other factor involved. Very well documented that a good teacher...a student who has a good teacher three years in a row has a tendency to excel whereas the same type of student with three bad teachers in a row has a tendency to never make it. So, it's not just picking the student, it's also picking the teacher. As Sherri mentioned, in the elementary schools, even through middle school the parents very typically can tell you the goods and the bads and if you could just distance yourself from the pettiness where people want to get rid of teachers for whatever reason -- I think there is a great way to differentiate a good or bad teacher if you just listen to the parents and how they pick classes for their kids. When you get up in to later middle schools, junior high, high school -- the students know who the good teachers are and you watch how they sign up for their classes. And so there are ways that you could differentiate on teachers. But the point I would make is -- we have an obligation to assure the best quality teaching we can and if this teacher isn't the best coming in, let's work with he or she to make it happen. Don't just say you're on your own. Go out and find some way. If their only incentive is to accumulate credit hours so their pay scale goes up and the credit hours worked in their field of study, why not take them and put them into a business setting for a summer as an intern to see what they could learn from the application of what there students are going to have to know when they get out in the real world. There are just all kinds of ways to where could enhance the quality of math and science --two of our key areas, as well as special ed. We never did take enough time to work...I laid that out as my agenda every year but it wasn't easy to implement because again there was this insistence that all teachers had to move "on bunk" -- as a whole group. You couldn't differentiate. Well, we have a shortage of math and science so if you don't have a person to teach chemistry and physics and you put somebody in there who has only had one course in all of their college curriculum but now they're the teacher? Well, that's not good. But if you said, "well, we'll pay you an extra \$5,000 a year if you'll come here and teach chemistry and physics." What's wrong with that? I could never grasp why we couldn't pay what would qualify as the market place for teaching? I'm a professional. You're a

professional. You're paid according to what you contribute in value. Not by some arbitrary standard that says because belong to a teachers group you're all going to get the same pay. I've never agreed with that!

JUNGE: Yeah. You would outline every, I think every state of the state speech – and I've got all but the last two---your opinion was that the family should be where the child receives his or her social and emotional support and the school was where the child gets his intellectual training. I guess I'd like to ask you what you think a good education is.

GERINGER: Well, for practical reasons – students don't always retain much of what they learned in class. There is much broader exposure than there is retention but there is an assimilation that goes on that teaches kids how to bring diverse bits of information together that become the basis for their judgment on how to react in society as well as to learn a profession or an academic discipline to where they can bring it to bear. A lot of things become – what is a good education? I think that the criteria that we set with the standards on science in these categories, so we understand the world around us; mathematics and ways to compute - how to solve problems – or to understand forecasting or anything to do with mathematics, design; the liberal arts so you just understand the context of being a person in society. You can't just totally segregate family and nurturing values from school -- academics and intellectual development – because there is social development, a tremendous amount of social development that goes on in schools. That's where kids learn what it's like to get picked on or bullied.

JUNGE: And intellectual development at home.

SG: Oh, absolutely.

GERINGER: There's no way to neatly separate the two and say this is only academic or intellectual because a well-rounded education for a student involves the home and the community. And the community includes whatever faith-based organization they have or don't have or the lack thereof and of course, the school. Parents who drop their kids off at school and would say, "Whatever happens at school is your problem. It's not mine, don't bring it to me." I think are parents who aren't fit to parent because they're not reacting well to that child at home. They're not taking responsibility to that child's nurturing. A good education involves the parents, the family or if the lack of parents then whoever else is encouraging to them because even in our own family, we have a son-in-law who did not receive a lot of support at home – had tremendous support at school socially and that became a key factor in him graduating. Same thing happened with one of our nephews when his mother died. He didn't have a lot of familial support when his mother died. He was almost an orphan. A combination of teachers and one of my sisters practically threatening him – three weeks from graduating from high school he was going to drop out– that's when she took him to task – practically took him by the ear and said, "You're going to get up there!" So family can be – biologically or people who care to see to the student's education.

JUNGE: I'm going to act as devil's advocate here but when I read your constant and I think repetitive emphasis on training people for jobs, I thought to myself, "Wait a minute – I don't think Jim's this narrow!" This seems like a very narrow concept. I don't think you meant it this way and I'm wondering. Is the whole purpose of education just to provide people for jobs to increase the

economy and thus provide more opportunities for better jobs?

GERINGER: That becomes probably the most measurable output of it. As I just mentioned, the liberal arts, civics courses you take – social studies that help you understand your world in context in history as well as part of what it could be. That's part of a well-rounded educated student, because then they're capable of understanding why service is important in a community. So, you learn as much through service as you do through academia. That's makes you a much better person whatever job you end up with but to give them enough academic skills that they can succeed either in a predictable, almost repetitive job like manufacturing or one that really has value in a knowledge-based society -- that's training for a job but it's in the context of how broad that can be. A knowledge-based economy assumes that the individual has a much broader grasp of what's going on and a more in-depth knowledge of a variety of topics than any of his predecessors. So a well-educated person by today's standards and how they can fit into today's society means you're not going to be part of an assembly line. You're going to be the one who thinks through and develops ideas on how to improve things, no matter what job you're in. You're always going to be thinking of how you can improve it. You're not going to be going in and punching a clock and going home.

JUNGE: So, you're not saying essentially we shouldn't teach art, music, sculpture....

GERINGER: No, those are all important but the strongest underpinnings of an education would be those solid core subjects like math, science, reading, writing, the language arts -- even geography... understanding the world around you. So, for instance when advocating for the Department of Workforce Services, part of the goal there was to help focus the many areas of state services to where it was giving meaningful support and also as a way to say to employer X -- "if we could recruit you to come into our community, what skills in the employees that are working there?" Now I can use workforce incentive grants. We can say that we'll train the people that you need. That will be an incentive for you to come in here because you'll have a high quality person in terms of ethics as well as in terms of skill. We didn't teach them the ethics but of course the Wyoming culture would be... we have a high quality of workforce... you just tell us what skills you need in that sense, we'd be very focus on a skill, not just an education.

JUNGE: So what you were talking about in your state-of-the-state speeches is essentially, and I'm paraphrasing, "My job as governor (one of my jobs) is to improve the economy and to do that we need an educated work force and do that we need an education that addresses that need."

GERINGER: Yes. It prepares the students for the economy that we have, for the economy that we want -- because you have to grow that or for the students that decide they're going to leave the state because a lot of the goal that I had was "I don't care if you leave the state -- come back later and bring your own business with you."

JUNGE: Sherri?

SG: I was just going to say that that part of education, as you put it, is important for the governor's goal but it does not exclude and never did in Jim's mind the arts, athletics, vocational training -- those kinds of things are still important but again, some of those things are things the family can

do. You know. In the summer time, do you take your child to a museum? We have season tickets to a dinner theater in Fort Collins and we take grandchildren with us from time to time. So, you expose kids in lots of ways, not just in the school building.

GERINGER: I did run afoul of a few people who were so focused on extracurricular activities and athletics that it was actually detracting from the academic side. We'd contend over what was most important but it wasn't to the exclusion of one over the other.

JUNGE: My wife and her friend would be very relieved if they didn't have to fulfill all of the bureaucratic requirements of their job. Let's put it this way. A lot of them maybe slide by and they still do their job...in their opinion and I think they realize this as much as anybody is to educate and to educate the basicsthat's their job and anything that interferes with that is something that detracts from that job.

GERINGER: Going back to that ocean of differentiated instruction. A large number of students -- if you watch students in a class -- I've done a fair amount of both informal teaching as well as formal classroom teaching. There are students who get it and one of the quickest ways for another student to "get it" is to ask a fellow student who gets it to ask "tell me how you understood that." And something clicks and a student becomes a teacher all of the sudden. There's a phrase that you should learn from someone, then learn with someone so that you learn teach someone. The most solidifying experience of education is when you teach someone else what you know. So, students in a class are capable of teaching each other and we've even seen that in a classes where you have kids of diverse backgrounds and even English as a second language where the teacher can't possibly keep up with all that and if they've encouraged the kids in such a way where they begin to teach each other the whole class is raised in terms of their capability but then there will always be those students who are self-motivated and can be self directed in their learning and that's where technology can play a huge advantage for those kids so instead of the teacher trying to teach to a block of 30 students or 25 or average class size in Wyoming is probably less than 20. In fact the teacher to student is about 12 to 1 overall but that's because there are some really small classes. Instead of the teacher trying to teach and get something through to everybody on the same level. Why not say, "Here is what we need to learn --here's some tools on how you can learn it. Let the kids who are self-motivated and pretty much disciplined enough to be self-directed. They can charge off and they can be learning themselves or even learning with someone at the same time. Meanwhile you have these students over here who are probably going to be neglected. Most classroom teaching is gauged toward --you can't teach to the high end because the rest of the class isn't going to get it and you can't teach to the low end because it slows everybody else down. So what do you do? You teach to a mean. And that's pretty mean! So the idea being, if you can somehow with somehow enable those kids who are capable of self-directed learning but with some guidance then the teacher now has more time to spend with the kids who are going to have a tougher time, who have different learning capabilities. Some kids are very visual. Some are very tactile. Some don't have the context of the subject matter you're teaching. You find out what they do have context in and then you teach them.

JUNGE: So you're in favor of mainstreaming, bringing in the low-functioning kids into the mainstream instead of segregating them?

GERINGER: Well, as much as anything because they're going to have to be socialized at some point so don't segregate them or they'll never be encouraged to learn. Of they'll of course the kids who are in that category should they or should they not be mainstreamed have an individual education plan anyway so they will have a full time if not a part time person working with them depending upon their level of disability.

JUNGE: This idea of getting help or tutoring from fellow classmates is not new. This went on in rural schools. A teacher would say to an older student or a better student or a more experienced student, "Work with him or work with her."

GERINGER: Yes. Most high schools today have an optional period for an older student to go back into the lower grades and be an assistant in the classroom.

JUNGE: But, what is new and I think you should be getting lots of credit is for this is for introducing technology into education.

GERINGER: It's the same principle as bringing technology to the state as a whole. I shouldn't have to pick winners or losers in the economic realm. We should have a common underpinning that raises everybody's potential. Then it's up to them to make use of it. It's the same way in the classroom. Where the challenge comes in is if the teachers have not been exposed to how that is a capable tool for teaching then they might only use the computer or technology because the computer is a commodity...it's incidental anymore to the overall notion of technology which is to connect people with knowledge. How can you do that digitally? How can you introduce new teaching techniques in the classroom when the teacher is just maintaining grade sheets or attendance sheets through technology and they think they're using technology OR a principal that says "all of our computers are in one place so we can control access and kids can't wander of the path" so it's a computer lab. That's not the idea. If you only have one Internet line for 30 kids, that's not teaching with technology. Technology -- we needed to have role models in education during my time in office. So there were several teachers including-- like Maureen Riff in Wheatland who at first were extraordinarily adverse to technology..."it's just not a substitute for good teaching. It's just not!" Over the process of learning how to using it she became so good at it, she took a year off from teaching and went around the state helping other teachers engage in how to be more effective using technology.

JUNGE: What a story!

GERINGER: There's a dozen other stories like that. You enable one teacher to teach other teachers...the same way with kids. You enable kids to teach other kids.

PODCAST 8

JUNGE: Off the subject, I've got to ask you this just for my personal interest. My sister is kind of a techno-phobe. I'm a bit of a techno-phobe myself although I'm further along than anyone in my family. She refuses to get a computer and email and refuses to get on the Internet. In your time in office, how did you get people....you must have just had to drag them physically. How did you get people into this technological world?

GERINGER: I told you it took over ten years to get the legislature dragged along. Persistence. Not by badgering them into it. By exposing them more and more to . At first helping them gain some confidence. They don't want something they don't understand to run their life. "I don't want to become a slave to this technology." And a lot of people are. That's why they call it a "crackberry" and not a "blackberry." That's one of the common phrases in the crowd I work with. Helping them ease into something with some familiarity to where they're not intimidated by it. I can still remember Becky teaching Sherri how to do searches on the Internet.

JUNGE: Becky?

GERINGER: Our youngest daughter.

JUNGE: (To Sherri) Are you a techno-phobe?

SG: No, I don't think so. I am not as adept at it as somebody like Jim. It doesn't bother me at all. I use the computer but I have to be instructed. If I get a new phone...I don't have a Blackberry because I wouldn't use all of the features of it but simple technology, let's put it that way.

GERINGER: So a lot of it is...don't tell them they HAVE to use it. Show them how it improves what they can do and is not intimidating. That would be true for anybody who is a techno-phobe. Don't view this as something that I don't want to do so I'll never do it. Show he how to use it so I'll feel comfortable with it.

JUNGE: Your innovations in educations in technology were what? You wanted to connect the schools?

GERINGER: To the Internet and to each other so they could share resources for learning as well as discover new resources. I'll tell you how it was abused. I guess it was one of my brother Rick's girls – was in a class where the teacher said, "just go out on the internet and do something." It was as a gifted and talented class type thing where they were supposed to use technology and the Internet to learn. So the teacher just said, "Go off and do something." They had all of the technology at their fingertips and they could be discovering anything at will but for what point? The point wasn't to use the technology; the point was to learn something. And to learn something in a way that it would be part of how you would learn in the future –discovering new information, new ways of doing things so the technology was incidental to the goal. That's why I would not say my legacy was technology in the schools. The legacy if anything was a greater potential to learn. I use that term carefully but the potential is there and the potential is huge compared to the potential that I had in school. Somebody needs to take advantage of it and the role of a teacher is to help guide that so there is a constructive approach to discovering new learning or helping teach others.

SG: Even now you tell people don't have technology as a separate line item as a state budget.

GERINGER: Yeah, or in your school budget. I would tell the principals and superintendents when I spoke to them, technology is important but if you carry technologies as a separate line item in your budget you don't know how to use it. It should be so integral to teaching to administration to

learning that you don't budget it as a separate line item. What they were doing was budgeting 80 or even 90% of a category or line item called technology or computers. They would categorize it as computers, dvd's monitors. I'd say, "What's the point of that? You want a system of learning and teaching and this is a part of that." But even as they categorize it they'd throw in training or professional development. So 80-90% of the cost went to hardware and at best 10% went to hardware. I'd say, "You've got your proportions reversed. Your highest value should be what you add to the value of that teacher through technology, not what you add to the purchase of equipment."

JUNGE: This is a much broader point of view, it seems to me, than what was expressed...and I don't know if it was your state-of-the-state speech. Did I miss something? Did you constantly emphasize to people that it's not just a machine. It's how you are learning?

GERINGER: Yes. I did that at every school conference. Particularly with principals and superintendents because a lot of technology – effective technology implementation within the schools was with a leader in the school who actually knew how to promote it. You don't just hire a computer whiz to come in and be your IT manager. You hire somebody who understands instructional technology who happens to know how computers work.

JUNGE: But they must have been rare in those days.

GERINGER: Yep. Very much so. It was just like the very first time we proposed chief information officer at the University of Wyoming so they would understand the importance of technology. They created that position as a result of a management audit activity in the legislature I was involved with. The University said, "That's a good idea." And then they promoted the head of the computer center to be their CIO. I said, "Boy, you don't get it at all, do you?"

JUNGE: Well, he might have been a good teacher.

GERINGER: He was a lousy teacher!

JUNGE: Ok, there you go. I understand exactly what you're saying.

GERINGER: My ideal would be a person who understands the issues as well as my chief of staff and he knows the technology as well as a computer geek. That's a rare person to find but at least you get the point that you have to see them as they work together and not just in segments. Most technology management in business as well as education, particularly in education, segments technology as a standalone rather than as integral to the whole learning process.

JUNGE: Who's idea was it to start the virtual university? The Western Governor's University.

GERINGER: It was a combination of people but the two stalwarts were probably Mike Leavitt of Utah and Roy Romer of Colorado.

JUNGE: You didn't have a part in that?

GERINGER: Oh very much so. I was one of the founding fathers. It grew out of one of those situations where as governors we'd sit around and say, "What problems can't we solve because we don't have the resources?" At the time, there were two issues that were pressing on us. One was the extraordinary growth of population in the west we couldn't keep up with the demand for higher education or education in general by just building more schools and hiring more teachers? Is there a way that we could take advantage of the technologies of today so that we could broaden access to education without adding tremendously just to the physical cost of providing buildings and grounds and maintenance and all the stuff that goes with it. Just as an aside, the actual dollars in a K12 budget that go into direct teaching amount to about 40% of the total budget. 85% of the cost is people but only about half of that goes into direct teaching.

JUNGE: I don't understand.

GERINGER: It says that you spend a lot of additional money on things that are peripheral to the learning process because they are essential the operation and maintenance of a school. So you take that to the university level –there are three things I guess that kind of came to bear. The first was resources that are not keeping pace with the demand that was out there, particularly the population growth. Second was the idea that higher education had gotten so enamored with itself that it was the sole judge of what was being taught and how it was graded. So, accreditation became less and less meaningful. Mike Leavitt came to me one day just before we founded this organization. He said, "Who accredits your universities?" I said, "Oh, I don't know. Something called 'Northwest.'" He said, "Is that a board or something?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Do you have any say in who gets appointed to that?" I said, "No." He said, "Who does?" In concept, they are good but in ways they are not good because they perpetuate old ways, not new ways. Probably the single biggest factor in establishing the Western Governor's University was we want to acknowledge that there is a difference between seat occupancy and hours accumulated in class and competence. That kind of comes back to the whole notion of what value have you added? Can you demonstrate that you are actually competent in the course you just took? And we came up with a relatively unique concept, which is still the underpinning of WGU – Western Governor's University. Can we gather a group of people together nationally – nationally known – who will describe the competencies that a person should have for business administration or for math and science teaching in the schools or for a certified registered nurse because we'd have all of those course offerings. We'd have quite a wide variety of business technology, education and now healthcare at WGU. Get a group of people who are the best in their field to describe the competencies that we'd need. Now lets match whatever course we can contract for at any number of participating institutions of higher education. And those courses will be delivered digitally, online with mentoring so if a person goes through the course and that person goes through at their own pace. They pay a flat fee \$5,500 a year no matter how many courses you take. Probably about one-fourth the cost of higher education in general for the same quality of education.

JUNGE: And you go at your own pace.

GERINGER: You go at your own pace. We had a 17-year-old graduate with a college degree. We had a 72-year-old graduate. So. Take heart!

JUNGE: He's guessing my age!

GERINGER: It's close to mine probably. The second part of that is that the people who are setting the criteria for competence are different from the people who are providing the course work are different from those who assess the competencies. So, in higher education in general, those three roles in general are all played by one person. The teacher in the classroom. The professor. He designs the course. He writes the textbook. Quite often, you have to buy his textbook. Or hers. He teaches the course and gives tests according to the way he thought he taught the course. Now, how objective is that? I had some who were just really good at that. I had some that were just really bad at that. So by our approach there are several different things that are just different about Western Governor's University. It's the only truly competency based higher education approach where we insist that we segregate competency determination from coursework from assessment. It wasn't to build a replacement institution. It was to set a trend for the rest of higher education to follow.

JUNGE: How effective was it?

GERINGER: Well, we're up to \$14,000 students in our current enrollment.

JUNGE: Where's the base? Where is it located?

GERINGER: Well, we have offices in Salt Lake City but we have students in all 50 states. We purposely didn't go international. We've had several offers to go international but that's just a whole different realm.

JUNGE: So you have a base of what – maybe a couple dozen people in Salt Lake who hire how consultant teachers or mentors?

GERINGER: Well. No, there's more than...I'd have to look at our total employment. I chair the board and I can't remember. I'm the chairman of the board of trustees. There's a great deal of effort put into student support. We screen students just see that they have the tools – that they have online capability to take courses. Do they have the motivation? Just an assessment are you really motivated to do this or are you just looking for a diversion. We used to let anybody in and there are just some people whose learning style doesn't adapt to learning online and you don't want to discourage them from learning. You want to encourage them to take a different route. Part of our goal was to...well, first of all there are mentors and they mentor the students pretty much electronically, digitally by phone or email and they say, "You're on this schedule to get to these things. You should be taking this assessment here. Are you having trouble there? Can we find you additional resources so you learn what you need to learn?" So, it's partly the student takes the initiative to say I'm having trouble and partly the mentor who is in there and says, "You're not doing quite as well as you probably could. Now what can we do?" So we monitor their progress, we monitor their academic activity. We monitor their ability to pay. If they can't pay, we find ways to help them pay for it. 70% of our students are we call otherwise "underserved." First generation college, minorities..in fact, now that we've been certified by NCTE – any college of teacher education has be certified by NCTE. We are the only virtual university accredited by NCTE.

JUNGE: Are you the only virtual university?

GERINGER: No. Not by far. Almost every campus now has a virtual arm and then you have companies like Phoenix...oh you have almost any number out there. Ours is competency based and its actually fully accredited in the areas we talked about -- legitimately accredited not like some of these that even operate in Wyoming – diploma mills. I'd say that 60% of our students today are teachers taking bachelors, masters and the majority of them are taking math and science.

JUNGE: Well, if there were virtual universities before, what was going to be so difference about WGU?

GERINGER: Oh! I thought you were talking about today.

JUNGE: I guess I am. I'm skipping back and forth.

GERINGER: There were a few. There's Kaplan. Public and high school level I'd say – higher education. The unique feature of this one was we were going to pay special attention to math incompetencies implementing the competencies and then measuring the competencies. That was unique and then doing it in such a way that we took advantage of any let's just say surplus capacity of any one institution. So you have courses that have been developed at other institutions but they don't have quite a full demand on their workload so we'd take advantage of that. So we could not exist as a virtual university currently constructed without being able to tap into the resources of a couple hundred other universities that partner with us. We advertise the competencies. We require the mapping of those to determine if a participating institution can meet those criteria and then we'll buy that course or make that course available.

JUNGE: Going back to its inception. What did you and Leavitt and Romer and the others see that needed to be done – the reason that you came up with this? Did you mention that?

GERINGER: Higher quality. The quality of higher education was in our minds declining. There was grade inflation. There was inconsistency. There were top research category universities that typically get it right but not always right. Probably what really motivated was the need to have more access to higher education so you have a more broadly educated populace. The attainment. A re-attainment of a state's population has a good deal of impact on the quality of how they govern, how they deliver services. It's the "whole person" concept. The advanced degrees make a difference, not only in terms of employment, in jobs but in terms of how you conduct your civic affairs.

SG: In the rural states too, being place bound is a real issue. By doing a virtual university people who would have no opportunity to take university level courses.

JUNGE: Well, and one of your main points was to allow people to stay in the state if they wanted to stay and this allows them to do that.

GERINGER: And this allows teachers to legitimately advance their own profession and not just take course credits. That allows people who are...let's say a spouse has a job or needs a job or wants to enhance their job opportunities or promotability. They can take a full time course load of

as much as they can stand as well as hold a current job.

JUNGE: The one thing I had a question about in virtual university – what is the role of a so-called liberal education? I'm not talking about politically but an education that includes the classics, a little bit of psych, a little bit of soc (social sp) a little bit of art, a little bit of music, physical education. I'm wondering if the classical –the Greek classical concept of a well-educated person is being somewhat distorted by making everyone focused on - setting a goal and meeting that goal when in fact, you were just saying that the family has such an important role in education. There's so much more than just testing to math, testing to language and testing to physics that a classical education incorporates much more than that.

GERINGER: I don't know that we ever find the perfect balance. There's a recognition that there are core subjects that you really should know that will determine more than anything else your future success but you can't get along without the others so how do you resolve that mix? If you have a hundred students in school, you have a hundred answers. So you try to - based on experience, which is the best way to move most of them along that path. Just contrasting Western Governors, one of the categories of students we have are those what we call non-typical college-aged students. I think our average age is 38. Now if you the classic concept of a liberal arts higher education, we're mostly talking about people coming immediately out of high school, they still need some socialization. They still don't have much for life's experiences. Life's experiences have a big impact on how fast people assimilate new knowledge. So the person who is 38, rather than 18, has a whole set of connections, relationships, life's experiences that they can connect new learning to and that's what solidifies part of that high quality education that helps you retain where an 18 year old doesn't have as many hooks to help retain that kind of knowledge. So part of a liberal arts education is to give them a substitute for that and that's why you take the other coursework whereas in Western Governors you can be more focused on a professional level education rather than just a liberal arts education.

SG: And it's not going to be, nor was it ever intended to be a substitute for a bricks and mortar institution.

GERINGER: It's serving a need that's otherwise unmet.

JUNGE: Ok. Because I was wondering what happens to you fraternities, sororities, what happens to your homecoming.....

SG: You can still do those things at that kind of institutions. .This is serving a different kind of need that's being unmet.

GERINGER: Fraternities and sororities are by and large socializing institutions and you build a little bit of a network for future reference but you can do that on LinkedIn today. Fraternities and sororities are in huge decline on campus. They're just on pertinent anymore as a way to socialize people.

JUNGE: That old campus college atmosphere is going poof!

GERINGER: It's a different college atmosphere. It's not that it's disappearing. It's taking a different route.

SG: They still have an in-place graduation. They go to Salt Lake City and all of the mentors, all of the people on staff around the country go to the graduation as well.

GERINGER: We have two of those a year – one in January, one in July and as many of them that can make it do. Oh, the stories they tell! They're just incredibly inspiring. It brings tears to your eyes even.

JUNGE: How many mentors do you have?

GERINGER: Oh, I don't know. We just reorganized them as to how they approach their jobs so I'd have to go back and look.

JUNGE: That's ok. I was just curious as to how many you have to pay vis a vie the University of Wyoming.

GERINGER: We might have 50-80 students per mentor so it's a full time job for them and our mentors are all over the country. One of our higher participation rate states is Georgia. I don't know why. Word of mouth catches on. The quality of...we're very keen on trying to measure the success of the student once they leave the institution because the reputation reflects on...not us, but the concept of what we set up. It's been very difficult because it's only those who volunteer who actually give you that information -- you actually need a statistical sample that's a broader cross section.

JUNGE: Ok, I will say this right now. I don't mean to flatter you but nobody has ever done this before. I think Phil Noble will be doing a series of interviews with Dave Freudenthal. Sue wants him to do it because he knows something about Dave and has worked with Dave and apparently has been friends for a long time so he may do a series of interviews. But nobody has ever done this. I'm crediting Sue and what we're trying to do here but I'm crediting you. Nobody has ever gone into detail like this on what he's accomplished as a governor and how he feels about the issues. Nobody has ever done that and I can't tell you how important it is going to be!

GERINGER: Well. It's interesting. One of the things I've always yearned to do was pass some of these things along to like classes at the University. Pete Simpson has a couple of classes. Once a year I go up there and students have picked out various topics they're doing collaborative research on and they ask for my reaction to their tentative findings and I give them this kind of reflection. If anything, I'd like to teach a whole course over there. Just be an adjunct faculty. The University's not open to it.

JUNGE: Why?

GERINGER: I have no idea.

JUNGE: I can't believe it. I mean Al Simpson teaches at Harvard! It's got to be one of the most

important things for those students to have a man with so much experience in government.

GERINGER: He even lived with the students for two years.

JUNGE: By the way, what do you think of this closure of the geological museum?

GERINGER: It's one of those things that you do to show how drastic things are.

SG: More critical is the firing of the development officers are in the colleges.

GERINGER: They didn't even give...the people who raise money for the individual colleges to extend their development funds like engineering, arts and sciences and health -- the University gave them two days notice to pack up their things and move out. They were going to eliminate 10 positions and then hire 6 back at some future point and all work under some centralized organization rather than individual colleges because that was just too inefficient. . It was a lousy way of managing anything so the president and trustees rally made a stupid decision. But then I've experienced some of these people who work for Ben Blaylock and they're professional fund raisers and they strike you as just that. Professional fund raisers. They don't strike you as anybody who cares a hoot about engineering. They're smooth. They're not personal.

JUNGE: Isn't Buchanan an engineer?

GERINGER: I don't know. So, the ten percent cut they went through included two people out of the museum which in essence shut it down but you always fund your highest priorities.

JUNGE: So, S.H. Knight, Wilbur Knight, all those world-famous paleontologists who worked in Wyoming 50 miles north of Laramie in Como Bluff, Lance Creek, Fossil Butte -- I guess that's just not important.

SG: They were probably looking for that kind of reaction and the people who really cared would take over and make an effort for fund raising. It's a great museum. I've taken kids there. They love it!

.....

JUNGE: Today is the 28th of July, 2009

GERINGER: My goodness. I was just getting ready for Memorial Day.

JUNGE: Well, you're a busy man! My name is Mark Junge and I'm in the home of Jim and Sherri Geringer and Jim and I are going to do the last of five interviews. Today what I would like to do is tough very briefly on some policy issues like environment, healthcare, social issues and then go into a little bit about your relationship with agencies, organizations, boards -- what it is like to be the CEO of 13,000 employees and then "d like you to do a summary of your career as governor. Achievements, maybe some failures. Reflections on the past Then I'd like to get into the conclusion which is "what do you think are the biggest problems facing the west?"

GERINGER: We've got about three interviews here.

JUNGE: I know, I know. The last time we spent about an hour and forty five minutes on educations and I think sometimes exploring a subject like that in depth is really, really good but the minus factor is that we've left behind all these other issues. Oh by the way, I should have mentioned that she will have a friendly input.

SHERRI: I'll try to keep my mouth shut but every once in a while I just have to say, "Wait a minutes. I remember that differently!" But when you're talking about policy issues, it's gonna be what his recollections are because I rally wasn't involved in policy at his level. I was working behind the scenes at things I was interested in working on

GERINGER: She's being too modest.

JUNGE: What is meant by the new economy?

GERINGER: The new economy is concentrating more on high value jobs that deliver that deliver knowledge-based services. You are paid for your intellect and your knowledge..not just your physical capacity to work.

JUNGE: In other words, we're transitioning from agriculture to manufacturing to technology?

GERINGER: Or, actually physical work to ...how shall I put it...knowledge-based work where you had value and productivity through leveraging whatever resources available to you ...it might be technology. It might be advances of any kind. It depends more upon people's knowledge and judgment than ever before and flattens out organization where before the hierarchy of even bureaucracies but certainly the industrial revolution all depended on a few people setting the goals, a few people setting the criteria and everybody else just delivering manual labor. And they had a secure future and a steady job as a result because as long as they felt physically exhausted at the end of the day, you'd done a good day's work. Today, that's a fairly low paying job. And that's a lot of Wyoming faced when I became governor was we were still very dependent upon physical and manual labor as the key to productivity grow the economy and those jobs just don't pay very much.

JUNGE: Do you feel like you significant advances toward a new economy?

GERINGER: Oh definitely. The thing that has kind of stood in the way though is that with the rebound in energy prices, people became complacent about not diversifying on a track that we're on although I think it has grown somewhat. I may have mentioned this in a previous interview. The Wyoming Heritage Society did a member poll. They did a poll to see how many of their members of Wyoming businesses - large and small thought that the Internet was key to their growth - being connected in a digitized age. 80% said they felt it would be of no benefit. That it was not needed for their business. And that wasn't very long ago - maybe ten years ago. They wanted to know my reaction. I said, "Well, they'll either be in the digital age and using the Internet or they won't be in business. I don't know how prophetic that was over the ten years intervening

but I would say that 80% use the internet as the primary way of advertising, communicating, arranging financing, keeping in touch – all kinds of things. So, it's come about. But it was very strange to them back then. In large part, the whole idea of connectivity which at first people thought that technology was computers. Computers are a commodity. It's what they enable. It's the productivity. The intellect. The capacity to leverage to your professional judgment that really added to the productivity of business of all kinds. That was about the time that the dot.com boom ended in the dot.com bust so there was a lot of disillusionment about "well, that was just a passing fancy. It'll never catch on." Fortunately, what it did was it shook things out. There was a counter activity that preceded that...the whole thing about Y2K..the year 2000 since we had programmed almost all computers up to that point using just a two year.. just a two digit code for the year. The software for many computers was at risk of crashing if it could not compute today's date or it would revert back to 1900 or 1901 and totally screw up the means for financial transactions and accounting of all kinds. Whatever they needed. Even the computers that controlled national pipelines. We had quite a to-do over whether or not the pipelines would even function. That could sure bring the economy to a screeching halt. So there was a big push that modernized quite a bit of Wyoming's infrastructure as well as the nation's in the technology field just to anticipate what might happen in the year 2000 so people had upgraded substantially. Then companies who had leveraged far behind what they should have were called to task and there was a crash. It wasn't quite the same as the financial meltdown as last September but in that arena, it was fairly significant. The reason it rebounded so quickly was the dire consequences that were predicted by Y2K didn't come about and there were just a few minor incidences here and there but very isolated. But what it did was it enabled the country to shake off it's overindulgence in how they were promoting technology and get it more focused. Not just buying computers and fiber optic lines but actually doing something with them and that's where the New Economy was really able to flourish and pick up so that's where...The whole notion of the New Economy was – we don't want just jobs. We want jobs that have high value so in the tourism industry which is always viewed just as menial tasks and labor...even the people who do housekeeping have a substantial responsibility for customer service and making sure things are working right. They're expected to use more judgment in the knowledge that they have rather than just performing rote tasks.

JUNGE: As long as we're on this, what do you think is the future of the New Economy, given the technology that we have?

GERINGER: Well, the services-based notion that the New Economy would promote means that individuals would provide more and more services and that the physical activity that used to be characteristic of work has been relegated to automated activities. If you take mining...the energy patch in Wyoming. It employees, even indirectly, only about 8% of Wyoming's economy but their productivity per worker is so high that their wage has probably double the statewide average if not triple. In agriculture where back in the day when homesteading was promoted in Wyoming, 80 to 160 acres was all that a family would take on because it required so much physical labor – the lack of automation, the lack of mechanization. Where today the individual –one person and his wife part time can farm our place -- close to 2,500 acres, that's a family operation. So that's, depending on how you look at it, many times what an average family would have been say 100 years ago. That's how the New Economy enhances productivity and it's the productivity factor that you look for in how technology is used. Technology has brought more information to the average person than ever before. It relates to how they make their personal choices, their civic choices, their

occupational choices and how they conduct their affairs. You have more information to make better decisions. You have the capacity to anyway. It's your choice as to whether or not you do it. That kind of points to one of the other things that was kind of high on my agenda. Enable people to take more responsibility to guide their own future and to be responsible for any actions that they take rather than just saying, "I didn't know any better" or "they should have done this for me" or "the government should have done that." "It's what have I done?" based on the tools and the capacity to be as well informed as anybody. So for organizations in the process of governing, it flattened things out tremendously so that individual employees could make their better judgments, see the consequences, see the benefits, make their choices and move on. That leaves..well, first of all, it takes away the requirement for a lot of people to just be in a supervisory role. Let people make more independent decisions but be accountable for them. That's the responsibility factor enabled through the technology of the New Economy and that's not just computers, it's the knowledge that technology brings. And then for those who are in a position of leadership such as the CEO, you set an overall tone, a vision, a direction and constantly monitor to see that people have the resources they need to get the job done. That is much more the role today of a very flat organization. The company I currently work for...ESRI..their organizational structure, as far as management goes, is very light. For a 4,000-person operation, there are probably only 5 senior managers because whatever needs to be done, a virtual team is formed and they go out and do the work. One of the coal mines up in Gillette, as I recall when I was governor, --they had two designated executives – the mine manager and one other and they met every morning to decide what work needed to be done, what coal needed to be mined, what reclamation, what community activities,...and then they would form virtual teams and go out and get the job done. The people who had the most experience typically ended up in a coordinator or more or less supervisory role but it wasn't by position, it was by the task to be done.

JUNGE: Isn't that the way it was without technology though?

GERINGER: Not nearly as much. Bringing as much information as well as knowledge and it would be...I guess you would call it a tradecraft. Tradecraft in the old days was learning as an apprentice to someone else, becoming a journeyman. A tradecraft today how do you employee your knowledge in a wider variety of areas so that you can be more flexible in your work. You don't have to specialize in just one job. Your specialization or your job still requires experience but you don't have to be so specialized so narrowly and you're capable of doing many other tasks. So, if the day's activities change, the outcome that you want for the day has changed, you can assign people differently than you would have in the old system where "I was not trained for that therefore I can't do that job. Go hire someone who is trained."

JUNGE: And that comes through knowledge.

GERINGER: Knowledge and training. So every time we focused on education for public good, kids, we also focused on what companies need or what people would like to be in terms of the workforce. So, there was always a parallel activity going on. Not just K12 or not just higher education, but it was "what are we doing to enable people to work beyond where they are doing today?" Gaining more knowledge or more experience or in a different direction to grow the economy.

JUNGE: Well, I see that as being more democratic too. This flattening you're talking about, isn't that democracy in the workplace?

GERINGER: Well, it is. It's more engaging rather than the old feudal system where you just did what you were told and nothing else. And, you'd better not do anything else! There was an inducement instead of a threat. Motivation instead of recrimination. It's a totally different approach and in turn, it does democratize because the best way to keep this type of government is where people see there is benefit not only to themselves but also to others. A dictator is certainly efficient but he probably won't grow much.

JUNGE: Ok, I want to get just some summary statements about some of these issues because we don't want to leave these issues behind while we talk about summarizing your whole career but on the subject of the environment, did you encourage the non-renewable energy resources, did you encourage their growth?

GERINGER: We did but I don't know that we knew how much that we could have done. The whole notion of wind energy for instance that's flourishing today. TMA was a start-up firm here in Cheyenne -- I ran across them quite early in my term of office. A vertical wind turban, a subonious (?sp) type in the terminology of design. A vertical shaft driven rather than propeller driven seemed to be so much more logical and why can't we make this work. Well, it's drug on considerably. But back then it was one of the more advanced approaches that we thought could be taken and we encouraged that. Geothermal was another activity in a sense that we worked through especially the REA -- the cooperatives to install what were termed heat pumps where you used ground water to assist with the heating of a home in the winter and the cooling of a home in the summer. Because ground water taken from a not very deep source has a constant temperate of 55 degrees. Well, if it's zero degrees outside, 55 degrees is a good increment --it doesn't consume energy except for the cost of pumping the water. You can either utilize it like for livestock or return it to the groundwater source. In the summertime, 55 degrees can substantially cool a 90-degree day. So that kind of thing was minimally intrusive. In terms of the environment, we knew that we wanted to balance the economy, which depended so heavily, at least the government depended on the energy income, just out of necessity, we needed energy development but we wanted it with some form of certainty. The companies didn't object that much to being regulated as far as protecting the environment. They saw benefit in it although some were reluctant. What they wanted more than anything else was certainty. "Tell us what the rules are so we can operate under the rules." Wyoming had significant challenge in that there was not always clarity in how that would work. And then in a national perspective, "What are our primary objectives with energy?" Is it going to be security, is it going to be economic growth? What are the terms under which we are going to explore for new energy? Then how do you balance that...say an economic growth factor versus a recreation value on public lands in Wyoming? We probably had greater contention with external groups than we ever did within the state. The people in the state, by and large, are just wonderful stewards of the resources that they had but then when you had the federal government trying to determine what to do with the large holdings of public lands, the external advocacy groups, the non-governmental organizations looking to places like Wyoming as a more or less a place to contend over how resources would be developed, Wyoming people often felt left out of that. But when it came to specific issues such as how far do we push new development or how far do we do things that aren't environmentally sound, my philosophy was, "yes, we need to

balance that somehow, but the resource that we're mining or extracting is limited. We're only postponing the time when those things will either deplete or become uneconomical to retrieve. So, we can either delay and have potentially less impact than we did by developing and ruining something." So, there was always this tension. Tension on our own values and tension with trying to mediate these external groups that by and large were well financed on both sides.

JUNGE: Who were some of those external groups?

GERINGER: External groups could be the Sierra Club, could be the defenders of wildlife. I don't know that I could recall all of them. And of course the major energy extraction companies that would promote... It could be Arch Coal. Exxon. Start-up companies..Express Pipeline that was coming down out of Canada that wanted to go across Wyoming to deliver products. There was a different kind of contention there because Wyoming folks by and large, at least the energy producer viewed Canada as extracting minerals and dumping and our economy driving our prices down. I finally just took a look at the energy balance on all of North America and I said, "Now, wait a minute. You're fussing over natural gas being pumped through Wyoming from Canada. I do an energy balance and North America is a net importer of natural gas. Why are we fighting with our neighbors? We ought to be in this together. It took a lot of persuasion to make people realize that Canada, U.S. Mexico --all working together enhanced the market opportunity rather than duking it out among ourselves and nobody winning. So that was balancing activity from a different perspective than the environment. But what's it worth living in Wyoming if you have a rich government but a poor population? Poor in the sense of the environment.

JUNGE: Was that policy or that idea of yours successful in the practical application?

GERINGER: I think that it kind of grew on them --the public's awareness. Not only by the advocacy that I had but also the increasing information available for the people to see. This is how we can more effectively manage. We took a look at what we would call the total number of environmental jobs in Wyoming. A person who is trained, educated to understand how to better manage for the environment's sake. I think the number I recall was 87% of all jobs in Wyoming that were environment classified were working for energy companies. They actually took it upon themselves, I think originally, "let's do these things so we don't end up in court." And then they began to see that there was a lot of benefit in this. It's in public acceptance. It's how we're viewed. It's sacrificing some immediate return but has some long-term benefits so they came around to that perspective I would say in the late '90's, early 2000's. Being environmentally sensitive was not only good for the environment, it was good for business, it was good for community relations. So, they saw a benefit in a sense like that.

JUNGE: Right. Did you continually do battle with some core environmentalists?

GERINGER: Not so much environmentalists as -- I don't know how to even separate that out -- there are always groups of people who would appeal any decision on legal grounds because in the world of business delay is detrimental. If you charted a course, secured financing, found your markets and you need to go ahead and pursue economic activity, any delay in that is extremely costly because the possibility of losing your workforce or they just go away for other reasons. The financing is expensive to just pay debt if you don't have income to cover. So the delaying tactics

through litigation were probably the greatest frustration that we had. People would not get together and work out an amicable solution. The tactic was let's just delay to the point where it will just disappear. The federal government under the Clinton Administration was just as difficult as any to work with. When the Bush Administration came in, that's when we discovered it wasn't just politics in a democrat/republican sense -- it was, I guess the reluctance of people to act in an overactive bureaucracy. People who work in government, particularly at the federal level are risk adverse. I still remember sitting with Kathleen McGinty who was Chair of the President's Council on Environmental Quality and responsible for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act or Jack Ward Thomas, who, early in my term was head of the U.S. Forest Service. They both commented, relatively in the same words, "We don't run our organization. The courts do." Whether it be allocation of resources on public lands or determination of how public schools would be operated in Wyoming, litigation is probably the worst form of settling disputes in the sense that...yes, you have to have legal certainty that courts can certainly provide given enough time but that's frustrating. But people do not talk to each other, they talk about each other in litigation where typically with an informed electorate and an informed group of people who are involved information that you exchange across the table, like the Kitchen Table conference, where you have confidence in people's willingness to listen rather than litigate to a fine point in a court of law. People look for ways to avoid. They confront. They conflict rather than cooperate and come to some sort of conclusion.

JUNGE: Did you ever feel like you got over the hump?

GERINGER: Absolutely. That was one of the greatest satisfactions of the Kitchen Table was that so many things were done in a way that provided better information to justify decisions than ever before. That knowledge-based justification became very compelling when it came time for somebody to think, "Well, I think I'll litigate this and see if we can win it." They would look at the work that had been done to date and they were less likely to find what they could pick out as legal deficiencies that they could litigate over. That in essence, moved things along to where it was less contentious. I think in the long run, the people who did battle before became quite willing to cooperate -- perhaps not totally yet but a lot more so than before.

PODCAST 9

JUNGE: Where did that impulse that you had to bring people together "over the hood of a truck" as you mentioned before or over the kitchen table, where did that impulse come from? Your background as a farmer? Your upbringing?

GERINGER: I don't know. I guess growing up in a small town might have had a factor. Parents...I grew up in an environment of an extended family...anybody who has an extended family knows that you never get along with everybody but you work it out. And, of course in rural Wyoming, the person you're mad at today might be the one who pulls you out of a snow bank tomorrow. Or it might be the one who organizes all of the neighbors to come help with the harvest when somebody has had an accident or a heart attack. The people who before were at odds always got together for the common good. There was always that notion that there was something more to be developed out of the common good than just the individual gain. Now that thought must have come to me over a period of time. It was certainly not my own invention. I could see how it worked

for other people. So, it was just the circumstance that just presented itself and I took advantage of the inclination and to no credit to me but to credit to the people who said, "Well, let's try it."

JUNGE: Let's go on to healthcare. What was your biggest healthcare issue?

GERINGER: Access and cost. We tended to put it in terms of quality and access and cost because we all want to enjoy a good life because if something is wrong we all want to go to people who are highly qualified and trained. We were constantly faced with medical shortage areas in the state. Small rural hospitals that were closing. I remember remarking once at a public policy briefing in Washington D.C. and the news media was there and I don't remember the setting or the conveners but the media and other public policy people were there...we were talking about healthcare in our states. I made the remark that in Wyoming we had 26 level 1 hospitals. One of the media people came up to me afterward and said, "We have 26 hospitals in one borough of Queens" ..that's the way he put it because he was from the New York area. He just couldn't fathom a state as large as Wyoming having so few hospitals. I said, "Well, part of it is, we try to take care of it before we go to the hospital or avoid getting hurt. If somebody falls off a horse, you pick yourself up and get back on. That's the old term of "cowboy up." I think a lot of people today have lost the notion of just grit your teeth and move on. Quit complaining about the scuff on your knee. Or, as our daughter used to put it to her kids when they would say, "I hurt myself. I need a band aid." She would say, "Is it dripping?" They'd say, "No." She'd say, "Then go back to what you were doing." I think America needs more of that than when we talk about healthcare reform today. We had the view during my time in office as much as I think should be prevalent but is not, that I as much responsible for my healthcare as anyone else by far and the choices I make either add or detract from my health and why isn't there more of that personal responsibility?" So as we looked at the range of healthcare in Wyoming, it wasn't just medical deficiencies of the trained personnel that we would need. It was also - how do we encourage people to make better choices, wiser choices about how they eat, how they act, how they perform their work? Safety in the workplace was important. Smoking cessation. All those things that could contribute to prevention or early intervention and mitigation. That's where we talked earlier about Sherri's leadership in the whole idea of promoting preventive measures being paid for by your insurance. The insurance companies fought that. I think in part because they saw that it would be a decline in premiums. In fact, it was good for the people. Insurance in a way is kind of perverted because I'm betting I'm going to get sick and they're betting I'm going to stay well or they wouldn't be in the business. So the whole notion of preventive care seemed to make sense from an insurance perspective but then from the overall health of the populace, taking responsibility for one's own health was one of the toughest messages to get across. People always wanted to have the assurance that even though they had made poor choices whether it be drinking and driving or taking chances in the work place or whatever personal behaviors that were high risk. From sexual to nutrition to any other kinds of behavior. If they're going to take the risk, then they ought to pay the consequence. So on healthcare people don't have that point of view. It's, "Whatever I did, go ahead and make me well." I didn't want to be cynical about it but I wanted people to understand that that's what drives healthcare up. We also looked at the number one reason that people were admitted to hospitals in the state and trauma was the number one issues. Trauma from work injuries, trauma from auto accidents, recreation activities, whatever. Some blunt trauma, especially brain injuries were one of the higher cost areas. On the other hand, chronic disease, ..when Wyoming was most youthful, the average age in Wyoming back in the early '80s, was I think about 27 years old. Today, it's

probably 38. The average age. So as Wyoming is aging out, chronic disease is becoming more and more prevalent. Well, how do we provide for chronic care? How many facilities are needed because facilities are established in many circumstances because of economic opportunity, not necessarily the service opportunity. And if you get too many of those, it drives up overall cost because they're not full, they're not efficient but they're collecting enough money but they're still charging too high of a fee.

JUNGE: Seems like there is still kind of a spiral. I see pharmaceuticals as costing way too much even compared to the value. I see that insurance companies have investments and need to recoup their investments and loss. This is all personal now so I want you to comment on this if you think it's wrong but I see insurance companies saying we have to recoup our losses, our rates are going up. I see hospitals and doctors charging more to make the bottom line come out in a positive way. I know this is a complex issue but I wonder what you see about things that are beyond our personal control. We can quit smoking. I can go work out at the YMCA and start improving my health but aren't there certain things that are totally out of a person's control?

GERINGER: Well, there are. Just driving down the street, you might be the safest driver in the world but the person who hits you isn't. That wasn't your fault but you're going to need healthcare as a result of somebody's poor judgment. So, it might be that that drives up the insurance costs. Socializing risk is one of the ways that America has always chosen to minimize the impact that a sudden event might have. We had friends up in Wheatland – he was an extremely successful wheat farmer and chose not to be insured so when his health crisis arose, he lost everything. He went from being comfortably a millionaire if you will to being a pauper just because he couldn't pay his debts. They sold his farm and foreclosed on his house. You have to weigh the risk of not going into that kind of circumstance versus doing and then risking that possibility that the organization that insures is either too large, too uncaring or just too manipulative. I don't know what the balance is. That's why you have regulation. So government does serve a role. In fact, government's key role is public safety and regulation so that others have the guidelines in which they operate. When it becomes too prescriptive as to how, not just to what, then it becomes quite burdensome. Let's take Medicare or Medicaid as healthcare for chronically ill or indigent people... both systems are....I'm trying to look for the concept here.....Rather than just being focused on the outcome of making a person better, or helping to prevent a health incident, a disease or whatever, it becomes more focused on what can I justify to recoup costs. So, there is such an entrenched healthcare system now that is so locked into this concept that what government has set out and prescribed – not just set wide boundaries but here is the exact procedure that you must follow. Here is the exact route that you must go to justify your cost. Here is the maximum that we will reimburse you. You go find the balance somewhere else. Covering the uninsured, which becomes a cost shift to the remainder of the insurance industry – all of those I think are aggravated as much by a heavy-handed prescription of how to conduct business rather than just setting the broad goals or criteria for success. In government, we call them performance benchmarks. What benchmarks should we establish that says, “You've done your job as an insurer. You've done your job as a government health provider.” We don't do enough of that. It should be gauged on “who am I serving?” “What is their quality of living?” “How can we factor that and determine whether it needs more or less regulation. That I think would do more...that, plus personal responsibility and accountability would do more for health reform than anything else.

JUNGE: I went through a little bit of the Title 8 section of the...I guess it's the Medicare law. It was incredibly obtuse and arcane. I was looking up something on oxygen because I need oxygen. I'm looking at the reimbursement from the Federal Government for oxygen supplies, oxygen equipment and it just befuddled me to read the law. I mean, it was section, sub-section, sub-sub-section to the point where I was lost. I think it would take a pretty bright lawyer to worm his way through or a pretty experienced person in healthcare to find out just exactly where the problem was. All I was told was "support HR 21, 23 because it's going to allow people a little bit more leeway when it comes to their oxygen supplies so....."

GERINGER: There's two things that happened at the Federal Level, not so much at the state level, at least in the smaller states. That is the tendency to add something to a bill or to a law that serves a certain purpose. The "airdrops" as they're called in Congress where something is dropped in after a bill has already gone through the whole process of the House and the Senate and in Conference Committee somebody does an airdrop and nobody sees it becomes law because everybody votes to accept but they don't know that they accepted it. That terminology is used because it's usually the most powerful person on the Conference Committee being the chair of the respective House or Senate Committee so they can drop something in. The other thing that happens with great regularity is we pass a law that sets boundaries, which is the noble goal. It's turned over to an agency to implement and they become extraordinarily prescriptive and even inventive as to what they can justify – not necessarily, probably not even with the intent of the law that is passed but as an opportunity to exercise power. If you take that example that you used of oxygen under Medicare, and apply that in say environmental management where if you neglected one activity, or if you misinterpreted another it could be subject to misinterpretation, you could litigate over that and stop a process. The whole thing about managing the environment in a state like ours -- you have a choice of leaving everything as it was – pristine or in terms of one of the objections that was filed for – against the gas development in southwestern Wyoming was that nothing could be done that would affect the pre-European settlement of the view shed.

JUNGE: Of the what?

GERINGER: The view shed. See the view that we have out there? Look at all those obstructions. Those houses. Those wind turbines that are out there. Those roads. Those fences. That's all come since the European settlement. The view shed should be pristine. It should be as it were before the Europeans ever showed up. A view shed is what you capture in your line of vision. If somebody, through a regulatory procedure, said that you can develop gas in this area, but the view shed must be as good as pre-European for this area, you've got all kinds of ways you could litigate that. So, if your choice is to do nothing and never develop a state versus slow it down in some way for a personal goal or a personal agenda, noble or otherwise, there's many more ways that you can litigate over something to prevent or slow it down than to actually advocate and move forward in an appropriate way. There's no clean answer to managing the environment because it will never be pristine or pure as long as there are more people that need to have a place to live.

JUNGE: Getting back to healthcare. It's been how many years since you've been in office?

GERINGER: Six years. Left in January of 2003.

JUNGE: Has your viewpoint changed about healthcare for your aging population? Has your viewpoint changed because you have aged? Have you gained any insights into that process?

GERINGER: Oh, I'm sure I've gained insights. I think that happens. What is the term? Good judgment come from experience and experience comes as a result of bad judgment.

JUNGE: It's like a waltz..one step, two step, three step.

GERINGER: So, over time, I don't clearly remember...that's part of the problem, obviously. I don't clearly remember what my point of view back when I first took office. When I first took office, I don't think I was as keenly aware of, for instance – Medicaid. I knew that Medicaid was a high cost item and it was relatively new to Wyoming. We had not accepted a lot of the Medicaid options during my time in the legislature. I had personally developed a philosophy that was, "Let's not accept any Federal money for any program unless it's a high enough priority that if the Federal money disappeared we would be willing to continue to fund it on our own." I lost that battle. I still think it's a good philosophy. American will never change that. It's just better government. I wasn't aware that most of the Medicaid dollars went to the chronically ill and the elderly. And, about two-thirds, say about 65% of all Medical dollars were being spent on the elderly but around 70% of all clients were children. So the cost per person – we were covering a wide range of children – for only 30% of the dollars and 70% of the clients..the ratios were totally reversed in cost and coverage for the elderly. I wasn't aware of that. I wasn't aware that we were paying for 40% of all live births in Wyoming. Today, I think it could be closer to 50% nationwide. I was not aware of that. That's where the notion of how do we fix healthcare and how do we provide for employment so a person can afford to buy insurance of whatever kind? I also had more of an uneducated view of health insurance and what it took to encourage more providers to come into the state. So, over time, I developed greater awareness, more knowledge both frustrating and otherwise about how we could improve it. So, as I have aged..in a personal way, I can probably empathize probably better with older people than ever before But I also know that at the leading edge of the baby boomers, a lot of the productivity that has paid for a lot of our capabilities in the past is going to go away as these people quit working. And they don't have the nest egg, as of last September, that they could have relied upon to substitute for getting a job. So they're either going to have to go back to work or we're going to be paying a whole lot more than even just the increase in population would have predicted.

JUNGE: Sherri. You were a part of this healthcare program..unofficially or officially?

SG: Unofficially, in terms of policy out of the governor's office. In terms of my projects, officially. I concentrated more on the prevention side with things like screenings for mammograms and encouraging people to get the immunizations for their children. And then safety issues for children as well. With so much of the money that the state had going to the care of children, it seemed logical to me that you'd want to things like save kids and teach children to always wear bike helmets. There was so much success with the seat belt law over a period of time – so much resistance when we started, but over a period of time, that gained acceptance where children were telling their parents, "Buckle your seatbelts!" When our children were little, bike helmets were unheard of. Yet, over time that has become a very good prevention for traumatic brain injury of children.

JUNGE: Do you think this would have evolved the way things were going or do you think you actually stimulated some change?

GERINGER: She'd be too modest, but I'd say, absolutely she stimulated it just like when she and Susan Thomas founded Race for the Cure for Breast Cancer Awareness. The early mammogram and screening. We've had story after story, people personally related to Sherri that that made a difference in their lives. They caught things early that wouldn't have caught. There's a wide range of what Sherri did.

SG: There's a national awareness too. It's the whole tipping point concept. Bringing an awareness into the state and then that's reinforced by what's happening nationally – we all have to work together.

JUNGE: One other question. What was your impulse for doing that? Why...I mean..Jane Sullivan got involved in wildflowers. Why did you get involved in health?

SG: As we've talked before, it's a people issue. That's what I focus on. It's a matter of service to people. How can you improve the lives of the citizens of the state in one way or another? That's why we focus on education and healthcare and good environment and good housing opportunities, jobs, those kinds of things. There's nothing wrong with wildflowers. Jane was a very active and involved gardener and that was something that really appealed to her—beautification of the state. But my issues were more focused on families and children and healthy families.

GERINGER: Just a general comment about government. I would say, and I use the term quite often...probably 90% of how we govern our lives in relationship to each other is not through the law or governance. It's done through it's how we act in our neighborhoods, our communities and especially in our service groups. It's what we agree to do together out of personal and collective motivation. I think that's inherent in human nature. Help people discover that. It's worth doing. That's the kind of thing that has motivated both of us in large part. Government has a role when communities have not found a way to get along or they have become unsafe because of some choice by some individuals in that community. The majority of how we govern is not done through the structure of government – it's done through our willingness to work together in service organizations and the like.

JUNGE: Well, but taking that to government, didn't you advocate consensus building within government?

GERINGER: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: Which was the same principle, right?

GERINGER: In delegating authority. You can't delegate responsibility. I was the person ultimately responsible for any activity in the state over which government had any kind of power to be exercised. Even in extraordinary circumstance so being able to flatten an organization or to build a consensus in many ways, said I needed to let go of some of that authority enabling other

people to be able to exercise that authority responsibly. And that's what consensus building is where people are brought to the point where they are genuinely motivated to carry something out rather than coerced to do it.

JUNGE: How successful were you? Isn't human nature such that no matter what you do people are going to have a tendency to do what they want to do?

GERINGER: In the end, that's what motivation is. Doing what you want to do. The question is, are they well enough informed to the common good that they understand that there is...in any partnership, there is mutual benefit. When a person feels they are constantly doing something only as a sacrifice, they'll get burned out. It is inherent in a lot of people to sacrifice without expecting anything in return for which I'm grateful because they've helped a lot of people. But if that's all that they do, they're going to burn out. There has to be mutual benefit at some point along the way and that's where you learn to give and take with your neighbors. I hesitate to borrow from my neighbor because I'm afraid he won't borrow back! But there comes a time when you have to actually borrow so you say, "Ok, can I borrow this so can you do that or watch this or..." people just do it. Neighborhood watch kind of grows out of this.

JUNGE: What do you think of the Ayn Rand idea of selfish rationalism. Now, I don't know fully what it is. I understand that it's...well, selfish rationalism pretty much describes it. You do what is good for you and thereby do what is good for the community because what is good for you is good for the community.

GERINGER: Well, I'm not qualified to speak for Ayn Rand or what she thinks. I guess I'd put it in terms of how do people even develop a faith in religion? There are so many religions out there today that are probably more like a cult than a religion because they depend on coercion and threat rather than motivation and grace. The whole concept of doing something good for someone else first is probably at the heart of people's faith. I'm not sure how to put it but when people hold authority, exercise authority and exercise threats through that authority and carry them out where people are intimidated to do something rather than motivated to do something and that selfish rationalization, if that's what it is, is much more negative. That's where people can't hold on to power just by doing things for themselves. They have to form a group, a business, a gang, a religion so they can exercise more power through other people but for their own self-satisfaction. So, yeah, you can build a community doing that. The feudal lords did that in Europe too but who did it benefit? It didn't benefit the Surfs. And just like ganglands in East L.A., it's the same attitude. "I will do something because of the threat to someone else's life or livelihood. They will have to comply. That's not where humanity is headed or shouldn't be.

JUNGE: What about some of the social issues. Affirmative action. Gun Control. But there is one big issue that took place during your tenure as governor and that was the Matthew Shepard case, how would you summarize that case now looking back at it?

GERINGER: I'd summarize it as I did during one of our previous conversations. To me, the loss of any life is a horrible thing and the circumstances only add to that horror. Taking a life is bad no matter what. How do you differentiate between one life being taken and another regardless of how heinous the crime was? So, I would summarize it in one way that I was caught off guard by how

strongly people reacted to Matthew Shepard because it was done as an act of hate. The individuals who killed Matthew Shepard were just brutal in how they killed him. And concurrent...at exactly the same time, an eight-year-old girl was abducted up in Cody. Tortured, sexually molested and then thrown in the city dump. Which is the more heinous crime? And that's what I said to Katie Couric when she asked if we didn't need a national or state hate crimes law. I said, "In either case, a capitol offense was committed. Once you execute judgment and execute that person and take their life in return, what else can you do? We have laws that cover both of those" The reaction that I received was I didn't care about people who were gay or didn't care about the hate whether it be racial prejudice or prejudice against anyone because of their lifestyle. So, I would summarize it in that sense. I was caught off guard by the public reaction, the media reaction that I equated all lives to be of value rather than placing a higher value on somebody's life because they were singled out because of their lifestyle to be killed. I still don't know how to explain that to anyone other than I value human life! Period! Why would you want to differentiate?

JUNGE: Well, I guess if you were looking at it from a gay person's point of view. This is a period of what a gay person might call a 'gay revolution' just like you had a civil rights movement, you've got the gay rights movement. But how do you feel about that? Do you feel that that situation will eventually resolve itself and that there will be more acceptance and tolerance of gays? Or, let's take the other side of the spectrum. Do you feel like it's a sin and therefore should not be accepted and therefore that's why you feel the way you do?

GERINGER: Well, I have yet to meet a perfect person so regardless of choices, lifestyles, faith, whatever the criteria be for being singled and done something to you, either denied a job in the workplace or physically tortured or whatever it might be. Who is to say that this group is better or not as good as anyone else? That's my starting point I don't differentiate. Yes, I can definitely see that there is a movement towards driving everyone to accepting gays no matter what. I've not stood in the way of any of that happening. When they had the days of demonstration over at the University of Wyoming at Laramie, I went over and met with the students and talked to them and took part in their demonstration so that they could call attention to the fact that behind the scenes, a lot was going on that shouldn't be tolerated. Well, exposing that was as important as passing any kind of a law. Then I looked at, "Well, what could we pass as a law that would add to the body of protection that's not already there?" And, frankly, I couldn't find anything. You could initiate another legal activity perhaps by having a hate crimes law but I couldn't find anything that was absent in the law that couldn't already be exercised to prevent that from happening. So apart from the law, then it had to be an attitude change. How do you promote an acceptance of people you may not even want to tolerate but have made their choice on how they want to live? I don't know what the outcome is going to be. In the case of Matthew Shepard, I think that there was a response that by and large was good to help people understand that there are many in their midst who have chosen or by their genetics are that way...why would you single them out? That's probably the key. How do you change that attitude? And if it can only be done through legal means, I still believe that there is enough in the current body of law to allow that to happen. That didn't sit well with a lot of people. The whole idea of "The Laramie Project" that became a movie wasn't very complimentary to the state or to this governor. I'm still puzzled by that because I was imputed to have motives that I've never had!

JUNGE: Well, how do you feel about gays? Does your religious point of view come into play

here?

GERINGER: I would say yes, because I personally don't agree with it but I'm not going to take any kind of action against a gay person as a result.

SG: You don't ask! That's not the key identifier to you of any person. Just like the color of their skin is not the key identifier nor their gender. But it's who they are inside!

GERINGER: I've always bridled against someone who says, "Well, you just don't like gays." Why would you even say that?

JUNGE: Well, maybe that's why you were puzzled about people's reaction to you; maybe they truly didn't understand how you felt. Is Sherri's point of view your point of view?

GERINGER: Yeah. I never asked anybody. There were people in my administration that I had no doubt were gay but I never asked them. What difference did it make? They were doing their job. There were human beings. They were being citizens. That's all we can ask of anybody. As I said, when I find the perfect person that can be the benchmark then we can decide how...legislate how to all be like that perfect person.

JUNGE: Do you feel bitterness about the whole treatment of the issue and the treatment of you?

GERINGER: I think more so for the people of the state because I don't think we have a mean-spirited state so the issue I think became a rallying crying rather than a statement about the state of Wyoming. We were held up by our lack of population or lack of influence. Much could be said that just because people are caught off guard when they have not really done anything wrong; they have not been insensitive but a few have and then whole state is cast in that light. It's just like when a few governors go off and get really screwed up in their lives – it reflects on the position of all who hold or will hold that position. So to characterize Wyoming's people as being anti-gay or terrible in terms of how they treat people or kill people I don't think that's a broad brush that anybody should be painted with and that's where I would have my concern. I was asked when exiting the office, "Is there a decision that you regret more than any other?" I said, "No. I don't regret any decision I ever made." I always made a decision at that time based on my judgment and the best information that I had knowing full well that if I had made the wrong decision or an incomplete decision I'd have the information to change that, to adapt to it. So no decision is ever cast with the idea that you may have delivered through perfect judgment. So I never counted any decision as one I regretted because every decision was made with the idea in mind that I've done what needed to be done and the decision rendered because to wait too long is a poor decision.

JUNGE: But going back, you may not regret that you made the decision based on the best information available but going back, would you do things differently in any respect?

GERINGER: Probably every job I ever did as governor, yes. I was best equipped to be governor when I left office, not when I started!

SG: There is no training to be governor!

GERINGER: Well, there probably is but it's not like going to medical school and taking an exam although when we were creating the Western Governor's University, I signed up for a degree program called "certified western governor." I became the first person to become a certified western governor!

JUNGE: Well, your legislative experience certainly had to give you some help.

GERINGER: Oh, absolutely. Oh, in fact, when we did strategic planning for the governor's office and the facilitator asked the staff, "what you think is one of your greatest strengths right now?" and the institutional knowledge that I brought on the budget process, the laws, the experience I gained as a legislator...that exposure was considered one of the top strengths of the office because it helped us see how things were done. It helped us understand the process so that our purpose could be better accomplished. Government will typically revert to being concerned over process alone rather than purpose. That's how bureaucracies operate. "Well, you can't do this because I won't let you." Our son and his family can't get a postal box out here because they don't have their house finished enough to where it's lived in. They said, "We're living in a house out here. We're living in a house adjacent to where we're building our house. We need a mailbox so we can have our mail delivered out here. We sold our house in town and we have to have a change of address why don't you just give us a mailbox?" "You're not living in your house."

JUNGE: So what would be the upshot of giving them a mailbox, to them?

GERINGER: It's against the rules. Pure and simple. The Postal Service says, "We won't give you a box so you can't have a box."

SG: So what they have to do is have their addressed change to this address and they can get a box down there for this address but when their house is complete in six or eight or ten or twelve months, then they're going to have to go through the whole process again.

JUNGE: Is that cumbersome?

SG: It's very cumbersome because it's a stamp every time you change for a magazine or whoever..

GERINGER: And they will forward your mail for up to a year but from then on you don't know who sent you a letter. That's what I mean about process. The idea is that we have the Postal Service for the benefit of the public. They're operating in the sense that this is not for your benefit, this is for our benefit. I don't want to have more mailboxes so I won't give you one. That's peculiar. That's process-centered rather than purpose-centered.

JUNGE: Can't you bring a little bit of your clout as former governor to bear on this?

GERINGER: Physically, maybe. Yeah. It's a simple example ...and probably the more sophisticated example would be Medicare. The whole thing revolves around process. It's like prescriptive management of the environment. We have a plant down here that manufacture

fertilizer out of natural gas.

JUNGE: What's the name of that plant, used to be Coastel Chem?

GERINGER: I can't remember (*for the record – Dyno-Nobel, Inc*) They were dictated how they would manage their entire process operation to control emissions rather than just having a benchmark set on emissions. You want to control the final product in a way that it's not detrimental to the environment, to the people and serves a good purpose but they were being told how they would actually manage their processes rather than just being told the purpose. Well, when we shifted from totally regulatory and you might say, coercion approaches to "this is the outcome we desire – you demonstrate to us how you're going to achieve this and if it meets our criteria, we will approve your process." So, the regulator steps back and says, "Bring me how you are going to achieve this goal. When I review it..it looks realistic.Let's see how it works and if you meet your benchmarks over the next few months, we've made a good choice. If it doesn't quite and we can tweak one thing, we'll do that in a collegial way." That's accomplishing purpose rather than just saying, "You did not shut down this process at exactly 12 p.m. on a particular day. You went until 12:02 so we're going to assess a penalty against you. " And that's how they can do it. And that shouldn't be.

JUNGE: Well, you obviously saw success with your approach.

GERINGER: Not always total success but I think I saw the benefit of that approach. That became to me the message that I would deliver to the people who ran the various departments of government. What is it that you're trying to do in the end? That should guide you. The example I use most often is the youth treatment beds up in Casper when I was asked in the budget process to provide more funding, approve more funding for the youth treatment center. I said, "For what?" "Well, we have more youth than ever coming in." I said, "That's not the answer. You should be working your way out of even having a need for youth treatment beds. What is your purpose here?" "Well, my purpose is to deliver the service prescribed." I said, "No, your purpose is to say what could be done up here to prevent the need for the beds here." That took a long time to get that point across.

JUNGE: They might come back to you and say that's out of my purview. I don't make policy.

GERINGER: No, but they are the ones in the best position to best assess how the youth even ended up there because if that person is placed in treatment, you diagnose what the circumstances were that led them to that point so you can cause a change in behavior or environment so the kid doesn't come back again.

JUNGE: It makes people think.

GERINGER: Yeah. Here I am, probably in the best position to see how this youth ended up here, I have a responsibility to go back up to the people who run the community of activities, "If you were to do this, this would not have happened. Now how do we bring that about?" And that's the focus that I wanted them to take so they were aware that it wasn't just doing a job, punching a clock and cranking the kids through that youth treatment facility. And, many of them were just

cranked out after a period of time, not on diagnosis. Well, they've been here six months. We've got to give them to somebody else."

JUNGE: Right. Yours was more of a problem-solving approach, I think.

GERINGER: I don't know if I would over simplify it to that point or not but I wanted people to understand that they could do more than just a repetitive job. There's purpose in your life. There's purpose in the service you are providing so it's not just solving a problem, it's motivating people to a higher calling.

JUNGE: Your relationship to agencies, organizations and boards. What's your opinion of the commission form of government?

GERINGER: Well, a commission form of government is very decentralized, very spread out. If each entity had it's own mechanism to be funded, boards and commissions could certainly do the job. They did it in Wyoming up until Ed Herschler, well even Governor Sullivan were in office. It was during the Sullivan administration that several legislators were concerned about the lack of accountability in the budget. Herschler would say, "I had to spend the money because the commission required it." He had no authority over budget, he felt. The commission did or the board did. So he said, "Let's look at a cabinet form of government as a way to account to a higher standard as to why money's even spent. So that there's a tendency for focused review in all activities in the context of a set of priorities rather than just always funding agriculture, always funding youth treatment, always funding whatever was set up under a board or commission and we had 85 of them -- should be organized to where the bulk of all services delivered by government are organized under a cabinet form and we picked 14 cabinet positions as being that. Although something like the oil and gas conservation commission still operated as a separate entity. It had it's own funding. It had it's own purpose, it's own set of laws. The could function independently. We called that a separate operating agency. It didn't affect the budget. It didn't affect anything in the state other than the conservation of our resources. That worked pretty well. If we could have put them under an environmental cabinet we would have. The people who felt strongly that it should not be consolidated with anything else prevailed.

JUNGE: The oil and gas industry.

GERINGER: So, I'm not a total fan of centralization but I am a fan of focused accountability -- someone who can hold them accountable. My approach with agencies, commissions, department heads -- anyone who was in charge of that particular activity or organization whether it be family services or the oil and gas conservation commission -- whoever was in charge, the board or the executive in charge, acted with the full authority of the governor. I said, "You are the governor, but I am responsible for your actions. If you're going to do something that you're not sure how it's going to pan out, let's talk about it but you have authority to act. I don't have to pass judgment on everything you do. Carry out your task and keep me informed on what you're doing."

JUNGE: So you formed a cabinet of 14?

GERINGER: We did legislatively first. I was on the group of legislators who put that into effect.

Mike Sullivan didn't really exercise a cabinet form where the cabinet collaborated extensively across their jurisdictions. He would bring them together for a formal meeting and not much interaction would occur. So the implementation of legislation that I helped craft came during my term in office and that's where we had sub-cabinets to review each others budgets and activities; to figure out how to leverage each other capabilities to work across boundaries and with the same resource, just do it far more just because it was more efficiently done.

JUNGE: Didn't you also avoid by that method the infighting and the nitpicking and the wheeling and dealing that went on in the micro level within commissions?

GERINGER: I might not have been aware of how much of that went on although I know it did. Yes, it reduced it because some people – call it protecting their own turf – which is the selfish well of saying, “well, I know you can do better than me but I don't want to give up my opportunity to claim it as my own.” So, whether it be an agency or a commission, either way, the people saw that there was benefit in them working together beyond just what they could derive in terms of holding power. That's the whole purpose of government – to benefit somebody else, not me. And where people felt like their job would be threatened, I didn't have a lot of sympathy for that. I said, “Well then you need to find another thing to do. If we're going to consolidate eight different vocational education activities to where we don't have to pay for eight different executive directors. If we have one, doesn't that benefit more people?” We would probably benefit several hundred people to find new employment rather than eight directors out competing for the latest grant writing opportunity. Well, that was just a tough choice if they chose to fight me on it.

JUNGE: Jim. Obama today is having problems with his healthcare plan trying to get it through Congress. He's having problems with his own party, the Democratic Party. There are some moderates who disagree with him and he can't just swing all Democrats over. Using that as an analogy, how did you relate to the Republican Party leaders in the state? Did you have problems swinging them over?

GERINGER: Before, during and after! Because I don't know of anybody who is a true Democrat or a true Republican. There's quite a range of political philosophy within each definition of a political party where they can group together to get something done. The whole idea of a majority is to get something done as long as it by and large represents the public's perception of what needs to be done, then they're returned to office. That's the representative form of government. They represent most closely, not exactly, but most closely what I believe. So, I can certainly say just in a pure analogy as I mentioned before I think I had 23 Republicans out of 30 in the Senate and I think it was 43 out of 60 in the House. An obvious majority on both sides. My observation would be – the larger your majority, the less you have control. When it's very tight, evenly balanced...then people definitely see the capability of doing things in a mutually beneficial way because when you're very close where the power could easily shift one way or the other, you're aware that the selfish choices that you make today could come back and bite you tomorrow because the tide might turn in terms of how evenly balanced you are. So the small the majority, the greater opportunity to get something done rather than the common wisdom that the larger majority will just get them to do anything. So Obama in a sense is having to contend with too large of a majority. You have people – the speaker of the House, the Majority Leader of the Senate, who are probably going to call their own shots before they call his shots. That's pretty obvious in the current

situation. That's not new but it's certainly being exercised. I think in terms of healthcare on the heels of all these other initiatives that he's put into place, coming from the position of having been a government CEO, you run a high risk of making some poor choices no matter how eloquent you are or how informed you believe you are as to the benefit of doing all these things. He's trying to do all the things as though he only has one year in office. I've commented before about what did I miss the most when I became governor and it was the time to reflect. And reflection is not just self-reflection. It's a reflection to see how things are soaking in. No matter what goal I set or what activity I wanted to implement through law there were undiscovered benefits or unintended consequences and it's those unintended consequences that you have to be mindful of. And that's where I think some of the reluctance is coming from the President's own party. I mean look at Medicare/Medicaid. Things are not going to be substantially changed. In fact, they will become the model of nationalized healthcare. Anyone who has ever worked with either one of them knows that it's a mess! And now we're going to institutionalize it in a national sense. The rule has yet to be written that says that legislation per se is not going to guide the outcome so much as the regulations that are written and those regulations will be written in many ways by the people who show up with the most power and influence to propose how those regulations should be written. There's a lot of uncharted territory out there and I think that's why he's running into it. So, his – this is a personal call on my part – I think he's pushing things more for political gain than he is for other purposes right now. He wants to solidify his capacity to do things as president so get them done quickly before your momentum shifts! That might be great politics but I think it's lousy government in the long run.

JUNGE: Well, maybe he's thinking, "If I can solidify my position as a leader and show people that I can do these things as a leader, then I can go into my agenda a little deeper and do some of the things I've always felt close to my heart."

GERINGER: He's still an enigma to most people. He is given wide deference right now because he represents an intellect, a person who is eloquent, capable of organizing and making things happen and quite often we pick our leaders based on those who can just get things done. He quite obviously has a track record of being able to do that and being able to motivate people to do that. But he's still an enigma as far as his personal values go to many people and certainly me. I don't know what really drives the man. I don't know what motivates him. Just a little glimpse into how he dealt with that Massachusetts/Cambridge policeman dealing with Professor Gates says to me that he still harbors some pretty deep animosity about prejudice in America. Well, how much of that is he wearing on his sleeve that we don't even know about? Whatever prejudices I had, I tried to make those secondary to the common good. I don't know his motivation in that regard. He might be completely on the right track or not. I don't know. I think my overall observation would be..if you have a wide majority in the legislative body of the same party, you are probably less capable of getting things through unless they are non-controversial and major change is never non-controversial.

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JUNGE: And this is major change? What was your relationship with the Wyoming Heritage Society?

GERINGER: It was more like a statewide chamber of commerce than anything else. It was the only group that by the mere convening of the fall forum drew a greater percentage of the population at a state meeting than any other state. People all got together – and not just for the topics that were discussed – that was kind of the focal point – but because everybody was coming to Casper for that particular Heritage Society event. School Boards Association always held their meetings around it, the Legislature always organized its leadership at that time. You look at the ancillary things that went on in conjunction with having come together for that. It brought more people together for more purpose than anything else. I thought it served a great purpose to helping people focus what they wanted to do with the next legislative session, how they were going to conduct affairs for education, for agriculture. They all seemed to convene around that target of...and I don't know of any other activity in the state that's ever drawn that kind of attention.

JUNGE: Your estimation of them is a good one. Therefore, I assume that you agreed with them on most, if not all of their proposals.

GERINGER: I don't know what they proposed.

JUNGE: They were essentially a conservative organization....

GERINGER: They were a business-centered, relatively conservative in the sense that less government was better. Probably in those general philosophical ideas, yeah. Probably so. I know that they were more inclined to promoting how they could do business free of government intervention than anything else but I don't that I understood all of what they might stand for.

JUNGE: So you're saying that they were more of a business organization than a...

GERINGER: I viewed them as a business-centered...and they took on education as strongly as anyone in the state...they took on the whole idea of the Business Council, the Wyoming Business Council - to grow Wyoming's economy and to diversify it. They weren't just focused on their own businesses, they were focused on many issues that I thought were just a good way to get them into the public view so their greatest service was probably as a convener...not just as a voice of business in a conservative sense. So I probably agreed with a significant amount of what they had to promote but it wasn't as a result of being connected to them in anyway. It was just participating with them. I saw benefit in it.

JUNGE: How was your relationship with the Wyoming Employees Association?

GERINGER: I thought fairly good. I met with them on several occasions. I probably met – I don't know how frequently – we always talked about what their concerns were. There was not a single employees union for the state. I think there were at least 23 different associations from the Highway Patrolman's Association to the oh, I think the largest group at one point was SEIU – the Service Employees International. Probably the toughest one, once I became governor....the less complex answer would be, I met with as many as were willing to meet with me. If they wanted to have me come over and just talk to them about what I was doing or not doing that they had some disagreement with, I did that. If I could promote their activities like the folks from the Department of Transportation – the Highway Association if you will and it's predecessor -- they always

sponsored a snowplow painting contest –the old snowplow with the blades that were being retired..they'd invite the local high schools to paint murals on the blades of these snowplows and I always gave them as much publicity as I could to promote the cooperation between the Employees Association and the schools. With the Teacher's Association or Union, depending on how you viewed it, I had a very close association all the way through my legislative term and then the National Education Association sent a person in to help more strongly organize the teachers. The way that business was being done, they wanted to make it a much more organized and vocal group and when the individual came into my transition office going into office as governor and insisted that he be consulted on all education matters before we did anything I said, "Well, it's not going to be that way." He threw quite a temper tantrum and walked out and then from then on I could not do anything right. So, I don't know how to assess that. I know that there were many teachers who felt like I was working to their detriment but I don't know what was being told to them about me. I just attribute it to that factor that he had an automatic insight just like when I threw the mineral companies out of the office one time. I said, "You don't dictate to me what I'm going to do. I'll listen to you and rationalize what's best but you don't prescribe the terms." So be it the Teacher's Association of the energy industry, I treated them the same and that was, "You weren't elected. I was."

JUNGE: The Employees Association. I was in State Government and I saw it as a pretty much abysmally weak association

GERINGER: Yeah, depending on what needed to be done, I probably did as much for state employee pay and benefits as any governor had done compared to the resources I had. Even in the toughest times, we took care of people and we always, as I mentioned before, we constantly encouraged training and education and letting people better themselves. If that message wasn't getting down to the individual employee, it wasn't for lack of trying. I emphasized that to all my agency directors. So we didn't do as much as we possibly could have and organizing for the sake of political clout is one thing. Organizing for the purpose of gaining better conditions in the workplace, changing things, improving pay, whatever it might be...you're right. I didn't think that whatever association it might be – whatever groups of employees that could be brought together, I don't know that they had extraordinary clout to do that.

JUNGE: Well, you did try to raise state employee's pay to market value.

GERINGER: I did. There were a couple of things. One was we had so many employee classifications that it was difficult to judge the value of a classification and quite often a classification was created as a means to increase pay rather than saying you have more responsibility or you have more authority. You need to be paid more for your skill or your position. So we consolidated many of those and then we established a body to review comparability. How should we determine what market salaries are? There are positions in state government that have a counterpart in the private sector. Those are fairly easy to calculate by comparison. Do you do it by just the salary? Do you do it by benefits or capability to stay on the job? In other words, you have a lower risk in government than you do in the private sector for a variety of reasons. There are more protections against termination. So even in a position that has a counterpart in the private sector, there's a slight plus that you could give to the public employee. We didn't factor that in too much but that became a factor when we could raise to market pay. Once you start to go down that

path, who competes for what position in state government? Who do you compare against when you compare Wyoming's environmental director with --like they have counterparts in every other state, but how many other states are like Wyoming? That became more difficult whereas clerical and other workers -- their jobs are much more common. You have a basis to compare them through employment reviews so we had a -- I can't remember what we called it but -- he used to have Mini Mart --the fellow that chaired that committee, Rod Kinski started that and then his successor took it over. We went out and searched for comparability so we could set a market value. Then we discovered that in finding those, we had some that were making more than market pay. Then we also discovered that in order to compete when we didn't have true market capacity to pay a salary to a new person coming in, they were quite often hired at near or even equal to the salary of a person who had been there several years. You probably heard plenty about that. I said, "If that's the case, we're not paying market rates. If I have to pay more to get a person to come to work for state government and they have probably less experience than a person who has been there for ten years and all of the sudden, I'm paying that new hire more or equal to, where is the fairness in that?" Likewise, if a person is up here above the red line. In other words, they're holding on to a position that has increased in pay just because of longevity but they're no longer worth what we're paying them, well, we didn't knock their salaries down -- we just redlined them and they couldn't get a pay raise.

JUNGE: What a quandary.

GERINGER: Well, you can never make it clean because there is no true comparability. Once the system has been in place and you try to change it, you either have to throw everybody out and start fresh, which is impossible, or you have to deal with those momentary inequities as they come along. I say they are temporary -- over time, they shake out.

JUNGE: Did you feel comfortable taking care of those inequities? There were certain things obviously you couldn't do. I mean, what do you do about that employee who has more experience than the guy coming in and maybe deserves it...

GERINGER: Well, in a time of economic stress, the person grumbled and still kept their job. They didn't have to work for government. They chose to work for government. So there was a perceived inequity -- probably an actual inequity. We couldn't resolve it completely and then it became a matter of personal choice. Do you want to have a job and put up with it or do you want to move on?

JUNGE: I was going to ask you about your relationship with the press. How would you describe your relationship with the press?

GERINGER: Rocky. Probably the one...a couple of examples. Early on, the Casper Star Tribune had a couple of activists had to tilt with someone. What I discovered was that many of the media people in Wyoming had to demonstrate how they smoked something out because then they could establish their track record and move up in the media market somewhere else. I didn't realize that. I became aware of it over time. I still remember going up to do a editorial board conversation with the editor of the Casper paper and some others. As we're sitting there, a reporter comes storming into the conference room where we are having the discussion. He plops down a piece of paper on a piece of stationery that was used by Mike Sullivan -- it was very plain. The letterhead and

everything was in blue ink. There was nothing to it at all. And then he slapped down another piece of paper that we had designed for my administration that had a color seal of the state of Wyoming and some enhancements, you might say to make it look more professional, more dignified. He said, "Why did you do this? This is a big waste!" And he points to the lower corner of the lower corner of the Sullivan stationery, which says it was printed on recycled paper. He says, "Yours isn't even on recycled paper. How much did this cost?" Well, it turns out that we were on 100% recycled paper. We just didn't print it on the letterhead. He was just so impertinent and disrespectful. I was caught totally off guard and the editor, who had held that post for less than a few months – he was so totally appalled at the conduct of his reporters, he quit the job later on. He said that the institution of government is more than one person. "Why would you take him on like that?" The person hadn't even gone to the extent to find out why we had redesigned the state letterhead, in ways that were more efficient as well as more appropriate. And you contrast that with the Cheyenne newspaper – Reed Eckhardt who was constantly printing things that were....One of things that happened early on before Reed Eckhardt came along was Scott Smith, I think his name was...my very first State of the State address,, I furnished copies to the press, we had a press briefing ahead of my delivering the message and went ahead and delivered my remarks. Well, because of time constraints I had written the State of the State. I delivered comments that were abbreviated. He didn't bother to tune to my speech. He went ahead and wrote up a column on an item in the written portion, not the broadcast portion. He had a scathing editorial about how I had manipulated the press. Later on, that same individual, wrote a column because of his perception when the first Wyoming person that was killed in the Afghan war, I didn't react, didn't lower the flags; was no gentleman. Hadn't even called to find out. Well, as it turns out, when I got word that we had that first fatality in Afghanistan, I was up getting medical tests at the hospital in Wheatland. I was in a doctor's office. I got the call that this happened. I said, "Lower the flags to half-mast." His contention was that I should have known a day ahead and probably did but didn't have the respect to lower the flags immediately. That was rocky! And then Reed Eckhardt took over and it seems that his goal was to increase readership at any cost. I think it still is. I don't think legitimate journalism is driven by selfish motives. We had lunch one day and he said, "What can we do?" I would not meet with their editorial board because they insisted that I meet with them before they would even pass judgment on my ability to govern. I said, "You can judge by what I'm doing. I don't have to meet with you immediately." So they took it as a challenge. "Let's see if we can force him to come to us on our terms." I didn't knuckle to that and Reed Eckhardt's comment was when I asked him why he printed some things that were just totally untrue he said, "It's not up to me to print what's true. It's up to me to draw people into the story and they will thereby correct any misstatement in the press." So his philosophy was print anything that you want, quote any source that you can without regard to good journalism. His perception of journalism was, you have to draw people into the story and they, on their terms will...

JUNGE: ...let them sort it out...

GERINGER: Yes. I said, "That's dishonest. I won't go for that." So, I did not have a good relationship with the Cheyenne Newspaper and Mike McCracken was just as bad. His goal was that the print media has to make a living.

JUNGE: I think they're not just in a competitive mode but a survival mode especially with internet news becoming so important.

GERINGER: Well, look how sensationalized their front page has become. It's more like a tabloid. It's sad because as I mentioned earlier the public has the capacity to be so much more informed. Why not be a legitimate source of information. But if you don't have an opponent. If you can't hold someone up as "I'm taking on the big boys or I'm taking on the establishment. There has to be an opponent out there to draw people into reading a newspaper. It puzzles why someone would take on the responsibility of guiding a newspaper, online or otherwise, to view their desire for holding court, as well as making money, as their primary objective rather than informing the public in a legitimate journalistic way.

JUNGE: Did you have any problems with the national media?

GERINGER: Not really, except for the Matthew Shepard case. I mentioned Katie Couric's reaction. She was just spiteful because I didn't talk to her the way she expected saying "we have to have a national hate crime, a Wyoming hate crimes law." But I never had any problems. I was quite often sought out for quotes when we went to national meetings. I never had quite the clout that say the governor of New York had because that's more significant. When you go to the White House and you have your day with the President and the Cabinet and you come out and the media are all lined up like a tree full of owls along the edge of the White House and they all want to interview somebody. Well, almost without exception they pick the people from the east coast because that was their primary market. When roughly 70% of the U.S. population lives within an hour's drive of any coastline including the Great Lakes nobody's going to come interview the...well, Mark Roscoe of Montana and Ed Schafer of South Dakota and myself from Wyoming were waiting for the bus to take us back to our meeting place at the J.W. Marriott Hotel from the White House. All of these other people were being interviewed so we just said, "To heck with the bus, we're walking." So, we walked back and nobody cared. It wasn't the lack of engagement it was just that we were not important to them.

JUNGE: What agencies in State Government occupied most of your time!!

GERINGER: Oh the big ones. Education. Health. Family Services. And then the collection of things I'll call public safety – corrections, probation and parole. All of the things to do with keeping the public safe or corrections in line and that reflected in the budget as well. Those four general categories would comprise about 85-90% of the dollars spent out of the general fund. So out of necessity in the budget and just by the nature of who they affected. They affected most of the people, they affected the biggest programs. Although on a given day, any issue could dominate. It could be a flood, it could be a fire, it could be a murder. So, on a given day you were drawn into the crisis of the day. You'd kind of have to shake yourself and say, "I have to deal with this but I also have to keep the long view." The pitfall would be was that if you paid attention to only those things that were fresh in the newspaper or were breaking news or something like that you had to say, "Now in the long run, what's the best way to approach this daily crisis?" I spent time on everything but I'd say the preponderance of time was spent on those big four.

JUNGE: Your background for a long period of your life was farming. Did you have an inclination to spend more time in agriculture?

GERINGER: No, actually I spent more time in the space program than I did in farming. Let's see...maybe about the same length of time – about ten years each. Ten years on the space program. Went from '67 to...when did I leave the?

SG: Well, you were still involved with it when you were in the Reserves too.

GERINGER: I'd say that the way that it affected me from my agricultural perspective – both as a youth growing up in agriculture because that would have an effect as well as being employed in agriculture ...15 years in agriculture there...I was struck by the fabric of what agriculture brought to a lot of our communities. The sense of personal responsibility, managing risk, helping your neighbor even when you disagreed with them. A lot of the values that came through agriculture were things that I did spend time on. I probably spent far more time though trying to promote jobs that were not agriculture because I could see that with technology, with productivity enhancements that employment in agriculture wasn't going to be a big growth. Although we did work hard to somehow engage more young people in agriculture because the health and sustainability of agriculture meant a lot to local communities so it was far beyond just the economic benefit.

JUNGE: Because you served in the military, did you have a tendency to spend more time on veteran's affairs than you normally would have?

GERINGER: Veterans and active duties. I had a close relationship with the base, the National Guard. When the Thunderbirds came to town to do their air shows, the tradition was to invite the pilots and the media crew to the Governor's House. They brought their families with them and they had a great time. When they're stationed at Nellis Air Force Base in the middle of a desert and those kids came out and have five acres of grass to run on, trampolines to jump on. They loved to bring their families! And one day I said, "Well, if you count the total entourage that comes with the Thunderbirds, how many of the people actually come to the Governor's house?" Well, it was a very small percentage. I said, "Where are all of the 'maintainers?' The people who keep the airplanes going and help them draw up the flight plans and everything else?" They said, "Well, they have a barbeque over at Warren Air Force Base." I said, "Well, then, I'm going." And I always went to those. Didn't just host the pilots at the...because I felt like the most successful officer in the military depends upon the whole number of people who are supporting that person. Just looking at say the Vietnam War when we had 500,000 people called up to support the Vietnam War and only 50,000 were actually fighting. I still believe that the Vietnam War was a disaster but it gives you a sense of proportion. I always had a keen sense that the military was as dedicated as any group of people to the betterment of the country and in defense of the country and deserved recognition however I might provide it so I was very close to all activities, not just veterans.

JUNGE: I have some summary questions that I'd like to ask. Did you have an open door policy while you were governor and I would add this....Governors of Wyoming have been known to have an open door policy, have been known to say, "anytime you've got a problem, come in and see me." Did you feel the same way?

GERINGER: Oh yeah. I think there were things that we could have done to better advertise that. For instance, Gary Johnson, when he was governor of New Mexico, set aside Thursday afternoon. He just put the word out, "from 4 o'clock until people stop coming into my office, you come in..."

What did he give them, five minutes? It was some short thing. “If you’ve got something on your mind, don’t give me the whole history, just tell me what’s on your mind. If it’s something I can take on, we’ll do it right away. If it’s something I can’t, we’ll find somebody who can. If it’s just a whine, you’re out of here in five minutes and we’re both better off.” That’s not a bad idea because it really encourages people to step up and say something but what we most often did...the open door wasn’t just in Cheyenne. The best open door was going out into the communities. So, for instance when we were doing strategic planning and trying to decide how to fashion a budget in difficult economic times, I took our cabinet leaders and budget people and we went out and had community meetings. When the school litigation had heated up and was already in place when I took over as governor, we wanted to resolve that so we went out and had town meetings on education. Well, at first, the only people who would show up were mostly the teachers. I said, “Well, we need to know what people expect from education, not just what the teachers feel that they’re not getting so we reorganized all of our town meetings –and I had them on just about every subject from workforce to education to economics to strategic planning. We’d go into a community ahead of time and say, “who are the community leaders that can actually bring about change? Who are they? There’s some elected officials, business leaders, service groups and the like.” Draw a core of people. We’ll put them around a rectangular shaped table and then we’ll have seating for anybody else that wants to come. Totally open. In the course of the discussions that went on, we got a lot wider range of discussion rather than just single-issue people. We got more parents to turn out. The initial meetings we had on education – I think in the first four, we only had five parents show up and no business people. I said, “What’s wrong with this?” When people were asked to come in, they came. But when you just said, “Ya’ll come!” people thought, ‘well, who’s going to care?’” There was a big difference in being asked to come by the governor and being told, “you can show up if you want.”

JUNGE: Well, what changed? What prompted these people to start coming?

GERINGER: Invitations. In the process because somebody knew his banker was going to show up or the person who headed the local teacher’s association was going to show up, others came too. So, it sort of rippled and we had far greater participation and everybody had a chance to say what was on their mind but many times in the end. But many times, people showed up just to see, “what are they going to say or conclude about our town?” If they were contented about the discussions that went on then their questions were answered without them having to speak up. But if they felt like it hadn’t covered the more important issues then they would bring their points up before we left for the night. We didn’t leave if somebody still wanted to speak. That, I think, was a more effective way than just throwing open the door and say walk in and , “you’ve got two minutes.” So, the open door to me, was kicked off when we had the ...instead of one inaugural ball in Cheyenne, we had four around the State – Cody, Rock Springs, Cheyenne and Casper.

JUNGE: Like balls?

GERINGER: Inaugural balls. And we always invited local musicians and participants to come. So much of state government tends to focus just in Cheyenne. I wanted to be sure that people understood, “This is Wyoming, it’s not just Cheyenne.”

JUNGE: Who were your closest associates, the people you depended upon the most?

GERINGER: Senior staff. Sherri. You know the people who could either give you encouragement or advice. Early on in my term of office, Mike Leavitt from Utah as governor. There's a tradition among governors that when a new person is elected, they informally designate someone to be your sounding board if you will so at times when we had a tough issue that I knew somebody else had dealt with, I'd call Mike or I'd call another governor.

JUNGE: Do you still call him?

GERINGER: We occasionally visit. We probably email more than call.

JUNGE: Do you have any best friends, Jim? I know this is a tough question because it's a tough question for me and I'd have to say, yes I do and I love those people but...do you have best friends in government when you're a governor?

GERINGER: Oh yeah. I think you do but you're always isolated in the sense that you have the final responsibility. No one else does.

SG: You don't make "new" best friends while you're governor.

JUNGE: It wouldn't be practical. I mean, it doesn't make sense.

SG: Well, for one thing, you don't have the time to nurture a friendship and a good friendship requires nurturing. That's one thing. Another thing is, you don't know who wants to be your friend because they want to be your friend or who wants to be the governor's friend. So, the people who were our best friends while he was in office were the people who had been friends before and were willing to wait again until... I mean, we had friends ..

GERINGER: I'm saying new friends though. The friendships we developed with other governor couples were extraordinary.

SG: Oh yeah well, everybody knows you don't have time to nurture those. You tend to them when you're together.

JUNGE: You had a file. Regularly in this box, this file shows up. It's called "Whackos."

GERINGER: That was not my term! But every governor gets them!

JUNGE: Do you remember any humorous moments? Whackos? Questions that just totally took you by surprise?

GERINGER: Oh, I don't know about that. I remember Santa Claus – a red-haired bushy bearded individual who would regularly come by the office and have to give his two-bits worth to the people up front or show up unexpectedly. Or, one individual named Leo. I always came to work between 5 and 5:30 a.m. and one of the young ladies in the office who as also an early riser would come and be available to not necessarily to do things for me but if I needed a little administrative

help in my early morning hours. It also gave her an opportunity to leave early. So, she gets out of her car in the underground parking garage ..or parks her car and all of the sudden somebody reaches over and opens her door. Well, it's XXX. He's going to give her a cheery good morning and see her on her way and it scared her to death! Now he wasn't in the category of the whacko but he was very eccentric!

JUNGE: Nobody tried to break into your office or say, "Governor, I'm mad as hell!"

SG: No, the front office took care of those kinds of people and they're probably the ones who came up with the "whacko" file.

GERINGER: When you compare with other states – when George Allen was governor of Virginia, he showed us a file of death threats that thick. Individual death threats he'd had against him and his family. I don't know that we ever received a death threat.

SG: No, there were a couple of times, situations that were uncomfortable and someone from DCI would check out what was going on.

GERINGER: As much for the family as for me.

SG: And the folks in the office, they would get occasional letters and they would turn them over to DCI.

GERINGER: Or the anthrax scare when the white powder blew all over..we talked about that.

SG: Or when somebody contacted Becky and sent her a letter.

GERINGER: She was only twelve years old. Because her picture was with us on the back of the highway map. It had all the earmarks of becoming a stalking case so we had that checked out. We had as much latitude and freedom as we wanted but with the admonishment from our security advisors who said, "you will never...the person most like to execute a threat against you is not one who is going to send a notice that he's going to. You have to be wary of any circumstance where you're putting yourself at undue risk."

JUNGE: Well, you didn't have a bodyguard, did you?

GERINGER: Not until my last...let's see. We had temporary or part-time security especially for national travel where you had to be in a venue where it could be a lot more risky. Protests or demonstrations or people who would take on a governor no matter what or who they were – just for symbolism. So most of the security was concentrated on that. We also had...when I traveled around the state..local law enforcement, particularly highway patrol, would offer transportation to a point where when we were ready to leave Cody one night after a meeting, we just drove up in a patrol car to McDonalds and made our order and the clerk didn't know what was going on.

JUNGE: Did you drive your own car?

GERINGER: I did.

JUNGE: Back and forth to work?

GERINGER Yes.

JUNGE: Jim, there's so many other things I want to ask you. We're not going to get it done but I would like to know what you think were your greatest accomplishments?

GERINGER: Well, I don't know. I'd like to think that we put a lot in place for the future particularly with education. We created a culture of people taking the initiative understanding that technology was not the in and of itself but what it enabled you to do far beyond yourself. So technology was not the motivation, it was the means to encourage people to step out and do something on their own. Helping people understand the value of results-based governing. In other words, what are the benchmarks we hope to achieve? Let's not just go out and go to work every day in government because it's there. Let's say, "why are we doing what we're doing, why isn't it better, how can we make it better?" So, that culture within government as well as outside government said, "We're a community. We're small enough in number that we can all acknowledge what each other's worth is, compete where we need to, cooperate where we have to or where we should." The whole idea of being more of a community motivated by the betterment of our youth in a state that ought to have long-term viability as far as the environment as well as the economy. Those would be my general things. In terms of specific things, legislation per se, because so many contributed to the success of legislation. I would not claim success for much of anything. My best two roles were to be an advocate and a resource provider. I can be the CEO to make sure that all laws are executed faithfully, which I did. That's not the hallmark of any governor's time in office but it takes a lot of your time. I insisted on accountability for all pardons and paroles. Pardons and a restitution of rights. There had to be a clear demonstration of a genuine feeling of regret or remorse over their actions before I'd even consider their request and then a demonstration of others that they needed to get a second life. The greatest demand for restitution of rights was right around hunting season. They wanted to bear arms so that they could go hunting. In terms of overall accomplishments, whether it be technology or otherwise, setting standards, targeting for assessment to see if kids achieved the knowledge they should and getting an opportunity to stay in Wyoming if they chose to or come back to Wyoming when they sought to would have been the one thing I would focus on more than any other thing. Youth.

JUNGE: What about failure? Would you consider that you had any failures?

GERINGER: Not to the point to where the state was irreparably damaged. Shortcomings, yes. Failures, no.

JUNGE: Ok. Do you think the state progressed during your administration?

GERINGER: Depends on what benchmark. I dug up a chart of employment figures so if I just looked at the state's employment growth over the times we had we were lagging the national economy, we weren't growing like we should. We had a net increase in total jobs every year and I included this in my state-of-the-state address. I tracked it back as far as I could. That would have

been '97, '98, '99, 2000, 2001. There's not a single crossover on those lines plotting employment every month of the year while I was in office. There was always a net increase in employment. That wasn't good enough. I also wanted to know what the level of income was. It's not just adding jobs, it's adding jobs that are higher quality, higher pay. So, in that sense, we improved it. In the sense of the most people-centered activities, whether it be health, family services or education, I wanted community-based solutions. I wanted to put people in communities, not in rest homes or institutions. De-institutionalize mental health. People who are incarcerated – help make them whole. Be contributors to society. Reduce recidivism. All those centers so much on how a community feels about itself and each other. So healthcare – building up the capacity of healthcare providers in a community to work together – we convened many of those. It was surprising to me how few healthcare providers in any given community ever meet other healthcare providers. Optometrists, the medical doctors, the pharmacists, the nurses – whether they be with a private company or with a public institution – every time we convened a group like that they were surprised to know that others were doing what they were doing. So that kind of convening power enabled the communities to step out on their own. We did the same thing for independent living where people could be better off, rather than being institutionalized in a long-term care facility...give them the capacity to stay in their home or in a better environment than just being institutionalized. People's minds just go haywire when they're institutionalized.

JUNGE: Do you and Sherri have people come to you and say “thank you” in various communities of the state? Thank you for what you did?

GERINGER: Yes, it happens a lot.

SG: Thank you and “we miss you!”

GERINGER: People will come up and say, “I'm glad you're out of there”! So, it's the ones who are motivated to say something that do, I guess.

JUNGE: I have other questions, but do you adhere to the Biblical admonition, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars' and unto God, the things that are Gods'—were you able to separate?

GERINGER: Oh, yeah. There's such a differentiation between what we impose on ourselves and what would be a higher calling. The idea of service to the citizens would be a higher calling rather than ... well, we enforced the tax code because that's what rendering unto Caesar is. And in the Biblical admonition, it was what really belongs to Caesar? Nothing. Caesar might claim authority over these things, but in the end – Caesar died. Caesar had no hold on anything. He has the month of July named after him and that's about it. Julius Caesar. Well, so what? Julio!

JUNGE: You had a granddaughter write something once I wanted to go into this. You said this was in a paper that you wrote for your granddaughter's term paper.

GERINGER: Yes, for her “interview a veteran.”

JUNGE: Yeah. You gave me that and it was on your military service and you said, “More than

anything, I will always be proud that I could make the world and where my family lives a better place.” Does that just about a sum up your view of life?

GERINGER: Yeah. In terms of holding office, you take your turn. You don't seek it as an entitlement. You make the world a better place. I admire Cliff Hansen's comment about what his father told him: “Where you find one blade of grass, leave two.” Whether it be the conservation of the environment, the ground, the pasture or the community. Leave an imprint. Resolve that it's better than what you found.

JUNGE: Jim, I want to thank you!

GERINGER: You're welcome.

JUNGE: I've enjoyed it mightily. I've got a lot more questions but I wanted to ask you questions about where you think the west is heading, where you think Wyoming is headed, the west and the U.S. Those kind of things. We could go on forever.

SG: Just like the old college “bs” sessions. Predicting the future, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah. I think a discussion does allow people to project a little bit and say, “Hmm. You know, maybe Wyoming's got some problems and don't think we're going to solve these but I think we have a chance to solve those.

SG: I think you're right. I think that you always have to be looking toward the future. You build on the past and where you are now but you're trying to improve things.

GERINGER: As you accumulate knowledge, particularly in the position of governor, you're constantly testing. Ok, I've come to this conclusion. I have this judgment that I've applied to this circumstance. Now what can happen that will change that? College bull sessions are kind of the same way. You're testing what you've learned or achieved so far. You can assert things as a way of testing against somebody else's argument or you can just throw it out to see what the reaction would be. In some ways, government is not that different. You're asserting something. You just happen to be in a position to execute it and make it work. As far as the west, I think the biggest uncertainty would be, “how do we manage in a world that used to not be aware that it was in a world?” In other words, we used to treat the U.S. as a stand-alone entity. We have to close out Canada. We have to close out others. China has more to say about our future than any other country right now. Well, what does that imply in terms of how we conduct our business? So the west will follow what the nation does as a general goal whether it's right or wrong. Set a course and we'll follow it until matters dictate that we change. I think that the west will always be less settled but just looking from our perspective here – the houses that keep cropping up. I have yet to see housing developments taken down, the ground restored and nothing else left in it's place – back to it's original pre-European settlement. Coal mines on the other hand – the coal is extracted and the ground is returned to natural content and contour.

JUNGE: Right and that's what bothered me when I went up to Pinedale. We were coming back down and I looked out there and I felt like you did. Those pumps will be gone someday but that

sloppy-looking subdivision will remain. I don't see people saying, "This is a mess. Maybe we should clean this up."

GERINGER: We call them..instead of ranchettes, they're 'weed-ettes!'

JUNGE: Yeah. Ok, thank you!

GERINGER: Thank you!