Interviewee: Olene Walker

Interviewer: Sarah Langsdon

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SL: This is Sarah Langsdon and I am interviewing Olene Walker at her home in St. George. It is July 5, 2012 at 9:30 in the morning. Good morning, Olene.

OW: Good morning.

SL: Why don't we just go ahead and get started. Tell us a little bit about where you grew up, your parents, and your siblings.

OW: I grew up in what was known as Wilson. It was the west part of Wilson, almost to Taylor and West Weber. I grew up on a farm. We actually had three different units and a total of about 130 acres, which was a little larger than most of the farms. I lived in an area where there were many small farms and families were able to survive on them. I didn't realize growing up that most of the people were rather poor, but no one ever thought we were poor. Since my father was involved in education—he was principal of an elementary and then a junior high and then of Ogden High School, before he became Superintendent of Ogden City Schools for, I believe, around twenty-four years. We probably were better off than most families in the area but no one thought they were poor. I didn't even consider the issue. It was a rural existence and we all worked on the farms when I was young. We grew tomatoes, potatoes, sugar beets—those hard, involved crops and we still grew alfalfa and had dairy and beef cows, horses, pigs, and chickens as well. It was really quite a rural life.

My father used to joke that the farms were his golf game and we all played. As a result, he was very busy with his job as Superintendent and with the farms. In addition, he was Stake President for twenty-five years. I don't remember him, in terms of church, not sitting on the stand because he was made Bishop when I was three or four years old and then was made Stake President when I was nine. I was thirty-four or thirty-five when he was made a Patriarch. So he was involved and he was really a workaholic. I've decided that in my old age. He got up early, farmed, went to his job, and he was always there before eight and didn't get home until five thirty or six. We ate dinner and then we went back and farmed, often in the dark.

My mother was like-wise a worker. It seems totally unrealistic now but she grew an acre and a half garden. Why in the world she ever decided to grow that large of garden, I don't know. Maybe it was that we had families around us who were rather poor. We had a widow with five children who lived not far from us. My mother would grow vegetables to give to all the neighbors. Even in her later years, in her late seventies, she still grew an acre garden. She cut down a half acre. Often, when I was growing up—she sewed most all my clothes, but she'd make an additional dress and send it to a family and just say, 'I thought you might like this. I had extra material.' It was never a matter of giving because they were poor. It was just that somebody might like this.

She taught school. She started during the War—1941 through 1945. She taught school until my youngest sister (who is almost sixteen years younger than I) was born. She ceased to teach school when she was born so she could stay

home. She stayed home for maybe five or six years when my younger sister went to school. They pleaded with her to come back and teach and so she did until she retired at sixty-five. It's ironic, I think of my father really being involved in education but when I go to that area of Weber County, I have so many people tell me what a great teacher my mother was. Indeed, I think she was because story after story comes back that she stayed during the noon hour to help students learn to read, or she would stay after school to help students learn to read. To me, perhaps the most amazing thing about my parents is that we only had one car. My father used it to go to work. We walked. My father was always willing to share the car but it was always in operation during the day. My mother would get a ride to the school that she taught at, which was West Weber. It was further west than where we lived so she usually got a ride to and from school. Of course, when my brothers became of teenage years and at the age to get a car, my parents finally got extra cars and they got an old truck, so it changed slightly later on.

I was the next oldest child in the family of four. I had a brother that was a year and a half older. He was two grades ahead of me because of the dates of our birthdays. I had a brother who was almost two years younger, but he was just a year behind me in school. Then I had a brother that was six years younger than I and then the sister that was almost sixteen. So I grew up with boys. I often played football and baseball with them. I remember my mother once said to me, 'Olene, I don't care if you play football, but you can't force your friends to play

because they always end up crying.' That was the rule. If they didn't want to play, they didn't have to.

But I really did grow up working on the farm with my brothers and playing games with my brothers. We lived in a neighborhood of small farms which meant that the homes weren't necessarily close together, but it was amazing how often in the evenings all the neighbors would gather and we'd play kick the can and run sheepy run and many of the games that were non-technical but were fun to play. I played a lot of marbles, which mainly the boys played. My friends and I rode horses in neighborhoods, mainly along the streets. We looked for dirt roads and there were several of them. We road bicycles a great deal. In fact, I remember often, taking quite long bicycle trips with friends.

I went to school at Wilson, however, I did go to summer kindergarten. At the time, Weber County did not have any kindergarten. I went and lived with an aunt who lived in West Ogden so I could go to summer kindergarten. It was fun but one thing I remembered about it, was that we were supposed to take naps after we had lunch or snacks. The first one asleep, the quietest, got to go in to crafts first. I never made it because I never went to sleep. I just couldn't go to sleep so I was usually the last one in to crafts. But, nevertheless, I remember it with fondness. It was a short period but we did interesting things. I went to first grade at Wilson shortly thereafter.

In second grade, apparently we had a small classes, so they split my grade into two. Half went with the third grade and half went with the first grade. I went back to the first grade with the group. Because I could read, I spent most of

my time helping the real first graders learn to read. It is ironic that I had gone with a cousin in Taylor to school the year before and the teacher offered to enroll me for the last few weeks and then I could go in to the second grade, primarily because I could read before I went to kindergarten. It was interesting experience. I'm sure I learned things in the second grade but my memory is just helping those first graders learn to read. I love to read so it was a good experience. I went to Wilson through elementary and through the eighth grade. It was a small school. It was elementary and junior high.

Ironically I was elected as Student Body President, but for some reason, and they didn't really tell me at the time, they really felt that ninth grade teacher—and we basically only had one teacher for every subject—was not stimulating enough. My father was then Principal at Washington Junior High and they talked me into going to Washington my ninth grade year. I enjoyed it. I'd hit an age where I'd become a little more social, way too social in fact and I kind of felt like the 'country cousin' coming to the city. People didn't have cars to move around like they do now. It was a long way from school for any activities so when there was something my father went to, I usually went. As far as going to parties and things, it was rather difficult because my parents would have to bring me in and then come and get me. I always felt a little strain on the ninth grade because being social I wanted to be part of the group but being a visitor it made it a little different.

I must admit, it was the first time I sluffed a class. I sluffed one class and felt so miserable that that was it. I felt that that teacher was going to ask my

father where I was and he was going to say that I was supposed to be in class. So when that happened, I kept thinking of all the stories I could tell him. It never happened, but it did inspire me to never skip a class again.

After that I went to Weber High. That too had some adjustments because I had left Wilson with a limited number of friends so I always had the feeling, well, Olene went to the city and left the country which is a strange feeling. Again, I was very social. If I had to do it over again, I would stick primarily to the academics and really prepare for college. But instead, I was involved in almost every thing you could run for. I was chosen to run for so many positions such as Princess of Sophomores or Junior Class Prom Queen or Senior Class Miss Weber. I was selected for most of them but I would always be a runner up or an attendant. You know, it really doesn't matter now, but at the time it was a little traumatic. One of my friends would always been the Queen. I did end up with a new group of friends, mainly from the South Ogden/Roy area. They were great friends and we still get together on occasion.

I did debate. My brother was a debater and in fact, he won the State debate tournament. So I was a debater and did fairly well. Again, I can't tell you how many debate tournaments I would get to the finals and someone else would win. This was probably good for me. It kept me humble. I did debate but I was interested in boys at that time. I ended up liking some of the big jocks. I remember one issue was that, even as sophomores and juniors, we'd go to games and then we would ride home on the team bus because someone would ask us to. It was really a fun experience. Finally some of the senior girls, in my

sophomore and junior year complained because the senior boys played last and they wouldn't get asked as much as the junior and sophomore girls would. Isn't that a ridiculous thing to remember from high school?

I was a Pep Club Officer my senior year. I was involved in many different activities at school—again, in my estimation, way too many activities in school. I enjoyed those activities when I was that age; a lot of dances, a lot of different club events, and it was a good experience, a fun experience, but if I had to do it over, it would be more academic.

SL: When did you graduate from high school?

OW: I graduated from high school in 1949. Maybe I should talk a little about my first memories. I searched last night for the first thing I could remember, and it still is getting my tonsils out, of all things, at age three or four. What I remember was that my mother made me a new dress with little green flowers on it. It had lace around the collar and the sleeves. I remember feeling very special because I got the attention of my parents and I got to wear this marvelous new dress with flowers on it and lace. They were tiny flowers. Ironically I remember getting out of our car and stepping on the running board, because cars all had running boards that you would step out of the car onto back in those days. I don't remember much about the tonsils hurting or anything of that nature but I did have a lot of colds and I think that's the reason they decided to have the tonsils out.

When I was still young, my brother at, I think, age six, came down with strep throat and they had none of the antibiotics and medicines that we now have. He was critically ill because the strep throat moved through his body and

settled in his hip. I remember, for example, spending time at my father's mothers—my Grandmother Smith's house because he was so ill. At that time we only had one bedroom and we slept on a break down couch in the dining area. Then there was the living room and kitchen area.

I remember one time they didn't think he was going to make it so they made me a chair bed and put pillows on it. It was right under the telephone and the old telephone was a party line, so it rang several times. I believe our ring was three rings but we had up to five or six rings on it. You would go to use it and at least half the time, somebody else was talking. It's amazing, I had friends on the line and they'd listen to the conversations I had with other friends and I would know that they had been listening. But anyway, that night I remember sleeping under this phone and the doctor's were there and they didn't think he was going to make it. They gave him shots of what we called Mercurochrome [an agent that was once popular as a topical antiseptic.] It's something you never even hear of in these days. They felt they had done everything they could and he just wasn't going to make it. But he did make it. After many, many months, he recovered. They did put a cast on him from the waist all down his leg, thinking they would set it because the disease had destroyed parts of his hip. They thought that if they did this that his leg would come out stiff but at least they would save the leg and the hip. Actually, when they took the cast off, he could walk.

I also remember that it was probably a little over a week later, we went over to the neighbors. They had a slant roof on their chicken coop and we got up

and would run down the chicken coop roof and jump and he did and he broke his arm.

SL: Oh no.

OW: So he got another cast. I look back on it and I knew he was critically ill and yet, I must admit, when he got presents, balloons, and candy, I felt a little tinge of, 'gee, I wish they'd give it to me.' So again, it was an experience where I felt our family had a lot of blessings. There was also that tinge of self interest that I'm hoping dissolved in my later life. Certainly, I think the thrill and the idealism of seeing other people get things and receive things and be able to do things is something that we all need to marvel at and enjoy their experiences and accomplishments.

SL: What impact do you think your dad had on education in Ogden?

OW: Everybody looks at my father as really being a very strong individual in supporting education. I remember the years that he went to the Legislature to get educational funding. I especially remember when J. Bracken Lee was governor. J. Bracken Lee was not strong on education and really cut funding. My father was a strong Republican in a then Democratic Weber County. I remember him coming home and saying, "If J. Bracken Lee was governor forever, it probably would eventually make me a Democrat, but he won't last forever."

I think the teachers went out on strike one time when he was governor just because of the cuts that were made. I think my father had a great deal of respect from teachers. At least one of the individuals that was president of the Ogden Teacher's Society said that the teachers would meet and decide what they

wanted, which was probably more than they would ever get, and they would go in and talk to T.O., as he was called. T.O. would say, “I’ve worked this budget as hard as I can and this is what I can offer.” All of the sudden, all the resistance disappeared because they knew that T.O. had done the best for them, in terms of salary, that he could do and so it was accepted. I thought that was quite a compliment because I think for years the teachers generally felt that he was on their side and yet he was very conservative in his budgeting. He *was* a Republican. I remember people coming to him wanting him to run for the Legislature. He would say, “I would like to run but there’s no use. A Republican cannot be elected in Weber County.” I look back and smile at that because years later when I was there and even now a lot of Republicans win in Weber County. I’ve heard more from teachers now that I’m grown, that worked with my father, and there was nothing but respect and admiration.

I’ve often wondered what motivated my father and my mother to get college degrees and even graduate degrees, because my father got his PhD and my mother got her Masters. Both of their parents only went to eighth grade. My father, apparently, loved to read. At least I’ve heard comments made by friends who said, “T.O. always had a book with him.” He always carried a book. But my father did go on to high school and then went to college. He went down to the ‘U’. He went on a mission to England and came back and finished his Bachelors degree at the University of Utah. He got married and then went on to get his Masters degree while running the farms. His first job after coming back and graduating was rounding up, sluffing and tardy students and teaching them at the

high school level which is amazing. The pay was so small. His pay was remarkably small. He decided to get a Masters, which he did at the same time, from the University of Utah.

He eventually got a PhD from University of Southern California. Now, he did this while still being a principal primarily and running the farms and being the Stake President. He would go to USC in the summer time. We all stayed home with my mother and ran the farms and he would come home on the weekend occasionally and work the farms and go to church meetings. But that was his schedule and he got the degree. I remember that my brothers mainly ran the farm while I did likewise right with them. We assumed remarkable responsibility for a lot of work.

One summer, however, the decision was made—I assume by both parents—that the most of the whole family would go to Los Angeles, California. My brother, who was six years younger than I, stayed at home with my mother's mother. We rented an upstairs apartment and it was small. My mother's younger sister went with us to tend us while my mother also went to USC. We had a great summer. I remember we would catch the street car on Figueroa and ride it to the end of the line and then ride it back. We would tell the conductor to remember where we had to get off. He was willing to tell us what stop to get off on. We caught the street car in every direction to the end of Los Angeles. Now, where we lived was not far from the Coliseum, the Stadium and a park. Nowadays, it is in an area you probably would not choose to live but we played in the park and had

freedom to go to the park. I must have been eight or nine years old and it was a unique experience.

We went again in the car and I don't remember the model or the make, but they took out the back seat and put our luggage right there to make the car level. Then we all kind of laid up there. Now, this was two brothers and myself and an aunt, so it was a remarkable experience. I do remember three always sat in the front seat—my mother, father and my aunt, usually. Just the three of us children were in the back. I assume we were about ten, eight, and six. The back seat was built up so we could lay on it, not sit on it. Being in St. George I should make the remark that we often drove to St. George, stayed in a park and rested until midnight when it cooled down. Then it was cool enough to drive to Las Vegas. We did this especially coming back from Southern California. We would stop in Las Vegas until midnight or after to make that huge drive, up the hill to St. George. You'd often see cars pulled over on the side with over-heated radiators. That was the dreaded part of that trip.

My father did get his PhD, which was unique in that time. I think he was very successful as superintendent of schools.

SL: Skip ahead and talk about where you went to college and sort of how you met Myron.

OW: Okay. I did get a debate scholarship to go to Weber College. It was a great experience. It was at the old campus. I debated but I also was still very social at Weber College. Somebody told me that I was the only person who got invited to the rush events of every social unit. They were called sororities but they weren't

national sororities. I had the fun experience of going to all these activities but I had to make a choice. Since most of my friends went in Otioqua, I ended up in Otioqua. It's strange, I remember the rush party at Pineview Reservoir. It was at a beautiful beach area. It was a fun experience being in it. Again, there was still somewhat of a feeling, not living on campus, that we lived a little too far. Some opportunities I missed because I didn't have a car and had to rely on transportation to get to Weber. I can tell you most every activity I was there.

I worked with the athletic department so one of my great honors is being part of the athletic team that went up and built the wall at the new campus on Harrison that said Weber State College. It was there for several years before anything else was built. It was just that sign. My claim to fame at Weber was that lasting wall that was built. Ironically I had not anticipated going to BYU, but my brother was going to school down at BYU and I went down to visit him. During the summer session—I don't know whether it was because of return missionaries or the fact that a lot of them that had been delayed because of being in the service, this was the fall of 1950, I had so many dates I couldn't work them all in hardly. I thought this was a great life so I ended up going to BYU. Now, I wish it were for some great academic reason. It wasn't. It was simply that it seemed to just be such an exciting place that I went.

Between the summer quarter and fall quarter I went with a friend and worked at Sun Valley for a brief period and then went back to the 'Y,' because all the beautiful girls had returned in the fall. It wasn't nearly as exciting as I'd thought it had been in the summer. I did get involved and enjoyed the experience

at BYU. It was not a decision that I had made younger and always wanted to do, because my thought was that I would go to the University of Utah. That's where my father went and so many of the friends at Weber were planning on going to the University of Utah. The fact that I ended up at BYU, looking back on it, was somewhat surprising. I did enjoy the 'Y' and I was stimulated in many classes by the professors. I ended up majoring in political science and minoring in history. My father kept saying, "Now what is it you plan to do with political science?" So I ended up also getting a degree in secondary education. In fact, it was only when I graduated that they realized that I had majored in two different subjects. The education department thought I had majored in education and the social sciences felt I had majored in political science and history. I did graduate with honors. I had become involved in the operation of some of the activities at BYU and ended up as Student Body Vice President. I was heavily involved in activities at the college level and I enjoyed the social arena. I did recognize the value of education.

It was there that I met Myron. Quite frankly, when I first met him, I was first attendant to the homecoming queen and on the float and he had just returned from a mission and was directing traffic. He became a business manager of the student body. He was a year ahead of me and so I got to know him in that manner. I must admit I was pinned to someone else, someone from Utah State at the time. It was a little traumatic. When I became a student body officer, I had some decisions to make. I really felt the need of getting additional education and felt I had the opportunity of going to law school at the University of Utah or going

to Stanford and continuing on in political science. I could get a scholarship to Stanford in political theory. I chose to go on to Stanford in political theory. But, of course, that made a very rocky road for mine and Myron's relationship. He had marriage in mind and I had marriage in mind but not for several years. Nevertheless, I ended up going to Stanford and majoring in political theory. I had graduated as I mentioned in honors so I was able to get the scholarship and attend Stanford. I had in mind wanted to be a professor at a university in political science with emphasis on political theory. I enjoyed Stanford. I lived on campus and ended up supervising one of the houses at Stanford—Manzanita—but it has been torn down. I pursued a more dedicated academic track; I studied harder, spent far more time working on papers and being involved in the academic world. I totally enjoyed it.

I did date other individuals but finally Myron pursued getting married. He, ironically, was stationed Fort Ord the whole time. It was only ninety miles between Stanford and Fort Ord, so I did see him more than I thought I might. Finally around Christmas I told him that I'd like to continue on for another few years. He made the proclamation, "Olene, we've dated long enough. It's now or never." So I had some serious thoughts and decisions to make. Of course, I made the right decision. I decided to marry Myron, which I did between winter and spring quarters. We moved to our first apartment in Pacific Grove, California, which meant that Myron could go to Fort Ord—they kept him in the finance department the whole time at Fort Ord—and I would go to Stanford. It was a ninety mile trip each way for a total of 180 miles each day. Now, why we didn't

figure out that we should live in the middle and each go different ways—it may have been because we were very poor and could only afford one car. But anyway, I drove to Stanford almost every day and back to Pacific Grove. That made a very long day but I did eventually get my Masters in Political Theory.

We got married in March and Myron had been accepted at Harvard Business School to get his master's degree that fall. After he got out of the service, we spent a short time in Ogden, but then went on to Boston where he got his masters degree. Now, I had really intended on getting my PhD but we had some surprises. I had had trouble before marriage with the reproduction system being consistent. The doctor told me that I probably couldn't get pregnant. I assumed this to be true, but guess what? Our first son was born in February, eleven months later.

At that time—it's interesting—they kept women in the hospital for a week. During that week, they kept giving me sleeping pills so I could sleep and apparently I had a reverse reaction and I stayed awake almost all the time. But I did get an infection. I was anxious to get out of the hospital after a week. I went home and I knew I was sick but I didn't realize how sick I was. Myron was in the middle of his first semester finals at the time, so he was under pressure. Then our son, Steve, didn't really look great because he had started to turn yellow. As a result, we ended up back in the hospital for two more weeks, which really put pressure on Myron. We ended up being there three weeks. I had had a viral infection but Steve had a seeping cerebral hemorrhage as a result of a very difficult labor. We were very concerned about his well-being.

We enjoyed Boston. We had good friends. We were all very poor. Our recreation often consisted of playing Monopoly on Friday nights or some other game at somebody's house. We did splurge. We got Boston Symphony tickets. On Sunday afternoon a group of us always went to the symphony. That was the one thing that we saved for over many weeks. We went on a very meager food budget so we could attend the symphony. It was an interesting time. We had good friends and we often got together with a group of friends on various activities. I remember between the two semesters, that we went from Boston to the LDS church sites at Palmyra, clear up to Quebec on seventy-five dollars. We often slept in the car with Steven, our youngest baby at the time, in the little sleeping bed. We made it all the way to Quebec and back to Boston. We arrived home with seventeen cents between us and an empty gas tank. But it was a marvelous trip. We went from Palmyra to Niagara Falls, on up to Quebec and took a great tour of Quebec and then back to Boston. It was the cheapest trip anyone has ever taken. All of our money almost went for gas and food. It was a great experience and we had a good experience in Boston.

After Boston, Myron took a job with the bank of Detroit. But because I was expecting our second child, I flew back to Salt Lake to be in Ogden to have the child. David was supposed to arrive the first part of June and then afterwards Myron drove from Boston to Ogden and waited for David to be born before he started work in Detroit. The wait became so long that he started to work with Bennett Motor to put in insurance department with the automobile agency. As a result, he ended declining the job in Detroit and we moved to Salt Lake. He

finished that project after a couple of years. Then we moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico where Myron was manager of (xxx) metal plant. Now, that's skipping over a lot of things.

SL: Let's skip back and talk a little bit about any memories you have growing up in Ogden—since you lived out in the rural area and then coming in to Ogden—what that was like for you. What you remember about downtown Ogden.

OW: Okay. You'll have to remember that I and everyone else considered Ogden to be our hometown. I remember walking to Ogden many times. We'd have to walk past the livestock yards, up over the viaduct that went over the railroad and the river. I remember a couple of times a board was missing and it was rather scary, but we would often walk in and it had to be five or six miles. Maybe seven or eight even but it was a great experience. As teenagers sometimes a group of friends would get together and go and just watch people parking on either Washington between 24th and 25th or on 25th Street. Often you could see people who'd had a little too much to drink coming out of the bars. Now, people watching sounds pretty boring to me in this day and age, but back then, with a car load of friends, it was rather fun.

I worked in Ogden between my high school and first year at Weber. First at a little shop that served coffee and meager lunch items and then I worked at a shoe store. It was strictly a shoe store. I don't recall the name of it. It is no longer there. It was between 23rd and 24th. I continued to work there part time while I was at Weber. Then there was a major conflict. There was a rather large debate tournament in California over the Easter holiday and the Easter weekend. The

store owner rightly thought, “Oh, this is our busiest time of year—Easter, new shoes.” I had to make a choice. It became either my job or going on the debate trip. Well, it was a major debate trip so I went on the debate trip and was very successful in going, so it made it worthwhile. I think we ended up as runner-up in debate and I also did extemperious speaking and was runner-up in that category. I was glad I made the decision that I made.

One interesting event on that trip should probably be noted. We came to St. George to a restaurant to have lunch and one of the debaters was the former student body president of Ogden High School, who was of African American heritage. The waitress came up and told our debate coach, Leland Monson, that they did not serve individuals that were African American, except that I think she used a different word. So, rightfully, we all got up and left. I didn’t even know about racial issues. I didn’t even recognize it, but I knew that wasn’t fair to that individual. She was very capable and competent and I am so glad that we did react in that manner. Other than that negative experience, it was a successful trip.

I was involved in many other debate trips. I had a partner, Vera Beth Robson, in high school. She went to Utah State and went on and did great things in debate. I debated at Weber with various partners. When I went to BYU, I didn’t get as involved in debate but often, they would call on me when they needed an extra person in debate or a temporary speaker. They would call on me and I would be involved. So it was also part of my experience at BYU, although I made

the conscious decision not to continue in debate because of the extraordinary time that it took.

SL: How was Leland Monson as a debate coach?

OW: I thought he was great. You know, you lose perspective of things. He was well known and I think very well respected by many other schools, even though Weber was an extremely small college at the time. As I grew up and came in to Ogden, it was a big city. I remember going to L.R. Samuels, thinking it was very exclusive and very special when I went there. My mother still made the majority of my clothes but to get something from L.R. Samuels was unbelievable. Also, there was Fred Nye and stores that seemed to me to be very exclusive stores at the time. I remember the Union Pacific railroad station as a huge railroad station. You would go under tunnels to get there and it just seemed like it was New York because of how large it is. I look at it now and it is so remarkably small compared to the major railroad stations. The stores that I mentioned were so remarkably small, but at the time as a young girl and even as a teenager, they seemed to be a major metropolitan area. I was part of it going there.

It's interesting, as I look back on it, I think of some experiences. I remember seeing, quite often, a horse and buggy parked somewhere down by where you first get off the viaduct, before you get to the old Safeway store, that's now torn down. I'd see this horse and buggy parked and I knew it was my neighbor, just a block up the street that had a farm, and drove a horse and buggy to Ogden long after cars were the only mode of operation. So we almost lived in two worlds there. He just said he felt safer with a horse and buggy than a car.

Often you would see unusual circumstances of that nature. I always felt very safe in Ogden.

In fact, when I was in high school, the determination was made that I needed braces—orthodontic attention. So I ended up catching the Bamberger from Ogden to Salt Lake and then walking to the dental office to get braces. I look now and am so amazed that there was no dentist that did orthodontic treatments in that early age, the late ‘40s, [in Ogden.] But that’s the story. So I felt very safe. There was never a question about my safety when going from the high school, to the Bamberger station, to Salt Lake, and then returning. Often it was a school day. So that was an experience. Ogden has changed remarkably. There isn’t the people watching, which is rather sad because there were people there, especially in that two block area with emphasis on Washington between 24th and 25th. There were also stores that went to at least 23rd, even beyond. It seems to me, as I recall, that there were a lot of people on the streets that you don’t see today. Ogden was a big city to me.

My father had been involved in bringing the Utah Symphony to Ogden to play. I believe they played two concerts. So very young I was taken by my father and my brothers to the Symphony and it really generated a love of music. Myron and I have spent a lifetime going to the symphony at various areas that we lived in. It was a special opportunity. Nowadays I don’t believe there are many people who remember his involvement in bringing the symphony to Ogden. He was involved in that and he was also involved in moving the old Dee Hospital out to 38th South on Harrison. Now they have an additional new hospital on, I believe,

44th South. So I've seen a lot of change, a lot of progression, in Ogden. I've also seen the demise of a lot of things that I loved and enjoyed as a youth. I don't see the people involved in downtown Ogden anymore.

I think almost every Saturday we went to Ogden to get groceries, but then the meeting place was the library that was just south of the City Hall. Every week we would get new books. We read a lot in our family. Quite often, in fact, our father would read to us. But during the day I remember sneaking away, reading, and my brothers saying, "After your work is done is reading time." I did read a great deal as a young person. That library held a lot of memories.

As I look back, I think the first thing I ever wanted to be was an elevator operator in that First Security Bank building on 24th and Washington. I thought the idea of doing nothing but going up and down, up and down, all day, seemed quite appealing. Then the second thing my aspirations turned to was being a librarian and being with all those books that I would love to read and being in that climate. So that was my second choice, I think all during college. As I matured, my direction was to be a professor at the university level. I've actually had some opportunities to teach at the university level but they've been minimal. I've had a great career but certainly the fact of being Lieutenant Governor or Governor was not in that priority list. I knew of no one who was either Governor or Lieutenant Governor—a woman that is. That wasn't even on my page at all. I am certainly grateful for the direction my career has taken.

SL: What spurred the decision to get into politics for you?

OW: The decision was spurred by the fact that after living in Albuquerque, Phoenix, and then Denver—we lived there for some time. In fact all my children almost were all born in a different city, so I can keep track of when we lived there by how old each one of the children are. Steven had Boston, which is easy. On the other hand, Lori had Albuquerque and we only lived there about nine months. Now she having to spell Albuquerque on forms has not been fair. But we moved thirteen times in the first eleven years of our marriage and had seven children and they were major moves. But I got back to Salt Lake and somehow we felt that this was a permanent move. Before long I did get involved, for various reasons, in a lot of different activities.

One of them was being Co-Chair of Block 57, as they redeveloped that in Salt Lake. Then they did a study of the elementary education in Salt Lake District and I was asked to chair that. I had someone that was staff that did most of the work but I got some credit for being chair of that committee and a few others. I had four or five people come say, “Why don’t you run for the Legislature?” There was an open seat because Genevieve Atwood was going to run for Senate. You know, five or six people—I thought the world wanted me. The last day I ran down and signed up. I then went home and looked at the District. Why I didn’t do it before, I don’t know. If I’d done it before, I would never have signed up because I found, at that time, I was in a district that was the third most democratic district in the state. Price was number one, Magna was number two, and the Avenues was number three. I worked hard. I didn’t make it through the convention without a primary but I had a relatively easy primary but I worked hard. I determined to get

to meet people I would have to go every evening after the 24th of July. So I knocked on doors all over the district.

I was elected in 1980 and the census revision of districts took place in 1982. At that time, there was kind of a battle between Bob Sykes and myself over who would keep the West part of the Avenues. I figured that's kind of my home base so I fought to keep it. He was a longer term legislator and won out and I ended up, for the remaining years, having the East half of the Avenues. It was the area between South Temple and 4th South, down to Main and the University area, which was Democratic territory. So I had to work very hard to win. Truthfully, it was the fact that I had seven children that probably helped me. I would knock on doors and a child would answer the door and they'd say, "It's Nena's mom," or "It's Lori's mom," or "It's Tom's mom," and I think that really is one reason that I was elected because of having children and I working to evaluate the Salt Lake elementary education system. So I was elected.

I always recognized that it was going to be a tough election because every time there was an election, the head of the Democratic Party would come to me and say, "We really like you, Olene, but we have to target you because your district is one we should have," and that was true and I knew it. So I worked genuinely hard to be elected. Finally in 1988, I was in leadership. I was helping new legislators experiencing having to run for election, and as a result, I ended up losing to Paula Julander. The shock was somehow not as great because I had been very fortunate to win four times in a district that I really, by looking at the

statistics, should not have won. But it was a great experience being in the Legislature.

The fact that I was in the district that I was, and had some of the very richest, but I also had some of the very poorest, gave me a broad range of conservatives, liberals, rich, poor, extremely educated, barely educated individuals to work with. Actually, when it came to any decision, I had the luxury of deciding for myself what was best for the State of Utah. I could look at the bills not in terms of my constituents will like this or my constituents will like that. It was what was best for the State of Utah. That was a real positive. It gave me the freedom that many of the others that were from very designated areas with similar backgrounds, and had to vote in terms of constituency, didn't have. I had the luxury of voting what I thought was right for the future of the state. To me that was a great experience.

I quickly got involved in terms of being chair of a committee. I think the reason I was selected as chair of the Appropriation Committee, my second term (which was a little unusual) was the fact that I asked Norman Bangerter, then Speaker of the House, "What should a new legislature do to be successful?" He says, "Well, the first year, don't talk much, just listen." The second thing he said was, "Get to know the budget." Very few legislators do that. I really did spend time getting to know the budget. If I had successes early on in my term, I have to give that credit, because the Legislature was male dominated. It still is. At that time there were only six women in the house. I don't believe there were any in the Senate—well, Frances Farley was in the Senate when I was elected so there

would have been five in the House and Frances in the Senate. The women were not often given special attention, but the fact that I could often answer fiscal questions, I think, was the reason I was appointed as Chair of one of the Appropriation Committees.

Utah is unique in that everybody is on an Appropriation Committee, which gives them some power. But you soon realize that that power is concentrated in the leaderships and so after two terms, I ran for leadership position, starting with Assistant Majority Whip, which I won. Then my fourth term, I won Majority Whip. The ultimate decisions are made by the majority parties leadership coupled with the minorities leadership, which includes one less in that circle. So because I saw the power really in that direction, I determined to be part of leadership. I had a great experience because I think, the individuals I worked with in those two years were very capable, unique, and were interested in what was right and what was best for the State of Utah. The first year there was Bob Garv, there was Gayle McKeachnie, there was Glen Brown—all capable individuals. The second term that I was in leadership there was Nolan Karras—Glen Brown was Speaker and Nolan Karras was Majority Leader and Jack Demand was Assistant Minority Whip. Both terms we had great individuals involved, who, I sincerely felt were there to make Utah a better place. To me that is the reason they should have been there.

I watched a number of women increase over the years. Utah had been the first state to have a woman senator, Martha Hughes Cannon. We had had women there with the exception of 1910 to about 1914. So there was generally

an increase of women until finally, when I was Governor, I believe that there were twenty-three women in the House and Senate, which is a strong positive. Unfortunately, we have slipped back. I think there may be only be between sixteen or eighteen there now. The election in November will determine a new number. I think that is a negative that we have allowed the reversal of the number of women. Not that women are any better, not that women are more capable, but that women often add a little different perspective to the legislative process and their presence is a welcome addition. Now I have to say, if a man and a woman are running in a district and I feel that the man has the right values and the right perspective, I say vote for the person. But if there is a choice and you feel the two are equal, in the name of diversity, vote for the woman. I feel it is part of my obligation to seek out these women, to seek out women who can run and have a chance of winning. It has to be somebody who will work hard, because in theory, a lot of people will come and say, “I will help you,” or “I’m so glad you won. I’ll be involved,” but when it really comes down to running and getting things done at the State level, it’s my feeling that support diminishes as time goes on until right before the election. Too few people are there to jump in and really do things to make certain that you win.

Quite frankly, one of my best memories of an election series was maybe the first one, where I didn’t want to spend a lot of money, and yet as typical women, I didn’t want to ask people to give me money to run because I felt that was an imposition. So I determined, because I had been working part time, to use that money. Because I’d been PTA President of every school—I mean, what

does a woman with children do? She's PTA President. Because I'd been involved in all three schools, I asked a teacher at Bryant and at East involved in history, if they would allow students to get extra credit if they worked on a campaign. The response was, "Yes, if you'll talk about the issues with them." I thought that was a good trade off. I think I asked the East teacher first and when I asked at Bryant I told her what the East had said, and she said that sounds like a deal.

I would often take three or four students out, start every evening at five, I'd walk with one student on one side, and take every other door and the other two or three would take the other side. They would say, "Olene Walker is right over there. Do you have questions?" So we kind of covered the territory and that was a great help. We did have a lot of political discussions in our family room and I am sure those first two years I spent more money on pizza and pop than ever has been done in the past. But as I look back on all my experience of running for the Legislature, Lieutenant Governor and Governor, that was a memory that I think was extremely positive and is certainly what politics should be—talking to young people, giving your opinions on subjects, urging them to get involved. I can think of no training better for the young people than that. I think too little of that kind of experience is presented to young people today. In this world of one-liners and glitzy signs, that has sort of been lost and it's so valuable.

I may have told you that my one great memory, a reward for that experience, was that about twenty years later someone called from Florida and said, "I'm Kent Conden. Do you remember me?" I said, "Of course I do, Kent." He

says, “Well, I’m a reporter for a Florida paper. Can you remember what you said about health care?” I said, “Kent, that’s twenty years ago. I’ve said too many things since then.” He says, “Well, here’s what I remember and I’m writing an article for the paper and I wanted to have you give any additional ideas and tell me whether my remembrance is right or wrong.” He was right on and that was a great reward because at least in one persons life the message had gotten through. So I see too little of that kind of campaigning and talking to people going on, dealing with issues in depth. That was some of the best campaigning I had in my political experience.

SL: When you were in the Legislature, were there some particular bills that you were very proud of that you were involved in?

OW: There were several bills. The one that maybe I’m the most proud of was the Rainy Day Fund. At the time, you had to look to at—well, you still do—have to look at the way Utah revenues are obtained. Unlike most states where education is funded by property tax, Utah in 1930 to 1933, the Great Depression years, had about a third of the homes unable to pay their property tax. So Utah education system was suffering. They then determined to have the income tax and the corporate tax fund education. This is not the building and maintenance program. It is the operational budget of the schools. So ever since our education system has been funded basically different than the rest of the states. In good times the revenue has always increased but in doing so, the good legislatures say, “Oh, we’ve got more money than we need. We’ll cut taxes.” Then as the downturn comes on, it goes down lower because they’ve cut the taxes and it becomes

harder and harder to fund education as the taxes decrease. The corporate tax, which they felt would basically be the major funder of education, has slowly disappeared almost from consideration. As a result, we have very volatile revenues funding education and yet we need the stability because you have to educate the children regardless of the downturn. Slowly our per pupil expenditure has decreased to the very bottom. In fact, we're not at the bottom. We're over a thousand dollars below the 49th state on per pupil expenditure.

I really was concerned about it and looked closely at what we could do when I was in the Legislature. I believe it was in 1985 that I ran across an article about establishing an education rainy day fund so that it preserved the revenues in good times and get the state through the negative downturns. I decided that may be the answer. I got a Rainy Day Fund written and they worked on it and it covered most areas and situations and what could be taken and what couldn't. As a result, I had the bill. I got it through the house that first year but couldn't get it through the Senate because Warren Pew became the guru of the budgets, revenues and funding in the Senate. He simply said that if we have extra money we need to give it back to people, we don't want to keep it in a reserve fund. So it didn't get through the Senate the first year. In the second year, Warren Pew had gone to Washington and someone had mentioned the Rainy Day Fund in such a manner that he thought it was a great idea. So he came home and asked staff to write the bill and according to staff, they kept saying, "But this in Olene's bill." He finally said, "I hadn't realized what a good bill that was." So I ended up getting it through the House the next year and he got it through the Senate. It has been

noted by many Legislators as almost sacred that they didn't want to use all the money there because it was so important in our bond rating and getting through down times, that it has become a very, almost sacred thing with the Legislature and has really helped Utah survive a lot of down falls and has been beneficial.

One of the most interesting bills I ever carried or sponsored in the House came from the Senate was the insurance bill that was five hundred and some odd pages long. I said, "You know, I'm not qualified to know this," and they said, "Oh, we'll work with you." So for about three weeks, two hours each evening, we had gone over the insurance bill. Time and time again so I would get the answers. I had told them that it had to run at least a week before the end of the session and that it couldn't be pushed through at the last minute. As a result, it came and we had the bill probably a week before it hit the floor. The morning of the debate I got up and made my introductory speech and turned the time over to the floor hoping I could answer questions. Not one question. I'm sure no one had read the full pages. No one asked a question. I was really disappointed because I was so primed to give intelligent answers and it didn't happen. So that was one unique experience with a bill that I thought was going to be critical that didn't happen.

There were other bills that I look back and think why did I carry that? One was getting state money for the Salt Lake zoo. As I matured, I really think Salt Lake County and City should have funded their zoo. But I did carry the bill that got state funding. One session, after it was over, I believe it was Bob Burnick who wrote that Carling had carried the most bills in the Senate but Olene Walker

carried the most bills. I didn't want that reputation so the next session I carried very, very few bills—only ones that I really cared about a great deal.

The Legislature is a remarkable experience because you learn about so many issues. For example, the Great Salt Lake—the debate was over what to do when we had so much water in the lake that it was threatening two sewer treatment plants. We finally agreed to put sixty million dollars out in the West Desert to pump it out. Those pumps have never been used since. So you make decisions based on the information you have, but certainly you learn a great deal. You learn about all different issues and options. You have over a thousand bills to read and quite frankly, I feel like I learned more in the Legislature than I ever did in getting any of my three degrees because of the different experiences you have with facts and issues and how they impact the state. Education was still my prime interest. I look back and see some of the tax cuts that we made—little tax cuts that people don't remember—I keep wondering why didn't I speak out louder about the fact that this will hurt education and we need to keep the funding there that we have? In retrospect, that's the one thing that I probably would do different although I did carry several bills impacting education and benefiting education. It was simply not enough. I should have done more.

Truthfully, was I hurt when I didn't go back to the Legislature? Of course I was. I had every anticipation of moving on in leadership and becoming Speaker of the House. That obviously didn't happen. But the fact that I was involved in so many different issues in the Legislature, it made me more knowledgeable as I become Director of Community Development and certainly when I became

Lieutenant Governor and Governor. So the training is a great experience. I have nothing but positive things to say about the Legislature. I think when I was there in the 80s, everyone generally did what they felt was the best for the State of Utah. What they attempted to do was strengthen Utah's policies as a state. I'm not certain that same dedicated rationale has carried forth in every case in the current Legislature.

One of the areas that I did work on was human services and the needs of individuals that need attention. I think that was the background for many decisions that I worked on when I became Lieutenant Governor and Governor. At the time, we were very concerned about how we were treating foster children. I worked with two or three bills that were focused on improving that service. The truth of the matter is, it wasn't sufficient to save us from a lawsuit when I was first elected Lieutenant Governor. I think there are many bills that are introduced that may be insignificant and probably are not needed in the state of Utah but on the other hand, many times, fixing a word or two in a bill will make a difference in people's lives. I think the ability to determine what is critical and what should be ignored is an aspect of being a legislature that a lot of people don't realize. Fortunately, when I was in the Legislature, very little time was spent on message bills. As ideologies have developed the past few years, much more time is being spent on those types of bills.

For example, I remember one time a great legislator introduced doing away with candy cigarettes and it was almost laughable—the discussion—because it seemed so relative and unimportant. It was important to her and they

disappeared, so I'm glad, but those kinds of message bills often get the attention of the media. Too little attention is given in the media to various tax bills that affect people's lives. It's interesting—I've talked to many groups since then, primarily about education, and I will ask the group what tax increases they remember. After a great deal of thinking they always say, "Many," but they can't name them. Finally somebody mentioned the one under Bangerter and I think that's the only generic tax increase that we've had. But yet we've lowered taxes twenty-seven times in the last twenty or thirty years and nobody can remember any of the times. I think it's a lack of focus or attention on those issues. There is more attention given on the issues that are the ridiculous bills that send messages rather than bills that probably should be considered.

I really want to stress the fact that those of us that have been in the Legislature have an obligation to do more than we are doing to encourage capable people to run. Again, the emphasis would be on women. I think that, through whatever means, there needs to be committees that concentrate on that process. I remember in the year 2000, for example, a committee was put together to get capable women to run in not only the Legislative office but for school boards, county council offices, etc. In that one year it did increase because of the concerted effort to get women involved. It hasn't happened in the past few years. Somehow we need to generate more committees to act in that direction.

I learned several things about being in the Legislature. One aspect I thought was interesting is that as leadership, my fourth term there, we often met

at the Capitol but we were often interrupted with various questions and issues. So the decision was to meet somewhere else at either breakfast or dinner. My house was the logical place because I lived relatively close to the Capitol. In fact, I often walked to the Capitol and back—a long walk down but a much longer walk back up the hill. As a result, we met at my home several times. I would fix something quick, either dinner or breakfast. But all of the sudden, the house speaker, Nolan Karras said, “All of the sudden, it hit me—this is not right. If we make Olene fix meals for us in addition to being in leadership.” we met away to get away from extra stress but we created her greater stress. We’re not going to meet here again and eat. We’ll only meet to discuss. You know, I thought that was remarkable insights. We made progress.

Maybe I should mention one incident that happened in the Legislature. I co-chaired, with Senator Peterson from Utah County, a looking at the future of higher education in Utah. During those hearings a head of one agency spoke. I asked a fiscal question and he said, “What’s a nice lady like you doing worrying about money?” I thought, ‘I’ll lay him low.’ Then I looked in the room and about half of the men put their hands over their faces and were embarrassed. I decided no, that isn’t needed. I just said, “With what you’re presenting, some of the nice ladies have to worry about the budget.” That’s another example of some of the bills that I carried because out of that committee, several things happened and I did carry over half of the bills that came out of that committee that had positive effect.

Number one: it created the language that said that any credit given to students at Salt Lake Community College or other community college, has to be accepted by the University of Utah, Weber—any Universities that give credit. I think that was a major change. It changed the name of Salt Lake Community College from the Skills Center to an actual college, which was a positive move. It gave some legitimacy to the community college and the courses that are presented there. It really was the background for our future in our community education. I think that there was greater effort to recognize that that was a critical part of the education system than every before. That was a positive committee and positive legislation came out of it.

Now there are other examples where committees have really focused in on an issue and have developed a legislation that has had an impact. Some of them haven't. If you look at taxation in the 1980s, a major effort was made to steady tax policy. There were five committees that were designated to look at different areas: property, income, sales, severance, and miscellaneous—thinking that the major system would be revised. But because special interest people and lobbyists were included in that operation, only two bills ever got passed. They really didn't change the tax policy. The first one was Truth in Taxation and it had a great impact. I didn't carry it. Frank Norton did. It mandated that any school board cannot increase taxes over the population growth without a vote of the people, which is a great factor and was a positive. The other was establishing the tax commission. But the problem was, by doing that one bill, the State School Board, instead of trying to raise taxes to improve education, simply came to the

Legislature, hoping to get all the funding. We basically turned our state education policy from local decisions, to the State Legislature, as the mega funding source for all education programs, which I consider a negative.

[Day Two of the Interview}

SL: This is Sarah Langsdon. I'm interviewing Olene Walker. This is the second day of the interview. It is July 6, 2012. We are at her home in St. George. It is about 9:30 in the morning.

Okay, Olene, yesterday we left off when you lost the race in the Legislature, so let's talk about what happened to you after you were no longer in the Legislature.

OW: I had been working as Director of the Salt Lake Education Foundation for several years. Actually, I started earlier in the 1970s working part time over a Federal grant, called Esau School Emergency Aid. It was a result of desegregation in the South. Salt Lake qualified because they were closing so many schools in the central part and the students were going out further from the central heart of Salt Lake. So they qualified. I had the unique experience of still paying attention to my seven children but I worked 40% of the time, for probably four or five years. I was so naïve, I didn't know you didn't get benefits until you were 50%, but then gradually I increased. About 1974 they asked me to start a Salt Lake Education Foundation. So I had been working as Director as this Salt Lake Education Foundation. With the exception of the Legislature, I worked full time for several years. After losing in the Legislative race, they asked me to be Director of Community Development in the State. This was a rare opportunity because I got

to know many of the different parts of the state. Quite frankly, we got news that they were going to give Federal money for low income housing, so I quickly got the state organized so we could accept it. I had a feeling that it might be short term and I developed the low housing team throughout the state. As a result, later on, that low housing money did stay and they now have a trust fund. It's called the Olene Walker Low Affordable Housing Trust. It doesn't fund building houses but it funds the last part that enables people to invest in affordable housing. In some cases where they built the house themselves on a low income basis, it gave the extra money that made it possible. I'm very proud of that designation. In fact, I'd rather have that named after me than any roads. That was a real treat. It was an interesting experience. We covered the arts, the arts council. We covered the volunteerism throughout the state. We covered housing and many services that worked with the state. So it was an experience.

While I was there we only had two people at that time covering the whole state in housing. The Federal government would send in a team of five auditors every year to audit it. They never found a finding—which was something wrong with the program—and I finally said to the lead auditor, "Why do you send five people for that length of time and it stops our work being done in the state?" His answer motivated me to run for Congress. His answer was, "We call it job insurance." I thought something's got to happen. So I ended up signing to run for Congress. I did very well in the polls and was doing well, but Richard Eiyer, who was running for Governor said, "If you're going to run, run as Lieutenant Governor with me." I said, "I'll certainly consider it." I thought it was a good offer.

The more I thought about it, the more being Lieutenant Governor made sense because I still had family at home, I still had a husband who was working in our family business, and it was clearly obvious to me that I would have to move to Washington and fly back and forth continuously. So I ended up running with Mike Leavitt. Why I ran with Mike Leavitt was because I talked to my good friend, Nolan Karras, who had been majority leader when I was majority whip. We sat together and had a very strong friendship. He said, “If you’re thinking of running for Lieutenant Governor, I want you to run with Mike Leavitt. I think he’s going to win.” So he arranged it and we met out at South Towne, at a food counter, to talk about it. Then I ended up riding up to Park City. I think the jest of that conversation was that I didn’t want to just cut ribbons and do secondary tasks. I wanted to be involved in policy. I wanted to be involved in different state decisions. He agreed that that would happen and certainly it did when I was Lieutenant Governor.

We ended up running in 1992, elected in 1992, and I was Lieutenant Governor for over ten years before I became Governor. I was involved in many interesting programs during that time. Certainly elections was the one that designated in legislation that the Lieutenant governor is over. At the time very little had taken place in the election office. A vendor virtually supplied all the materials to the counties and worked with the counties, but just as I went in they passed the Motor Voter law, as it was affectionately known, which meant we had to make many changes. So I became heavily involved in working on issues regarding elections. As a result, I ended up going to many of the Secretary of

State meetings nationally, because that's where all the information was given. We were only one of four states that didn't have a secretary of state. I attended those meetings as well as the national secretary of states. We worked very hard to establish an election office which handled the changing laws and working with the counties. I think we were successful because we ended up getting some honors for our efforts in election. Again, the emphasis was on elections when they ran in to controversy in Florida on punch cards and we had used the punch card voting system. We knew that we would have to change and so it was quite an active ten years in the elections office. I had a great staff who worked in that area and I was very proud of them.

Another thing we did—I was over volunteerism and we worked to have a volunteer office in every county, many at part time. I remember one of the most interesting experiences I ever had had to do with volunteerism. I'd gone to Park City to speak at a conference. I spoke and then had other appointments so I hurried back to the Capitol to keep those appointments. Later in the day, George Romney came to my office and said, "Olene, why did you leave that volunteer conference? That's the most important thing you could have been doing today." He chastised the Governor for not even coming and said, "I hope that you'll always be working on volunteerism because that's an answer to a lot of government problems, is to better utilize volunteers." That was a unique experience.

Other things that I worked on included health care policy. For seven years I chaired the health care policy task force. We dealt with a lot of issues. Many of

them were implemented into the laws. One of the major ones was starting the CHIP law, the Children's Insurance Program. Now most states just extended their Medicaid program and it was quite expensive. But we worked out a program where we could almost get two children insured for the money that came as a result of Medicaid. So we were very proud of that program and it's been very successful. But it took a lot of work and a lot of commitment. That was one adventure I lived through for seven years which was quite a period of time.

Another thing—in a meeting we talked about consolidating all programs connected with employment, including welfare. We ended up trying to make a change. I remember Charlie Johnson, who was head of budgeting at that time, said, "It isn't worth even trying because it won't happen." Governor Leavitt just said, "Well, I don't want to take the time to work on it. Olene, if you want to, why don't you work on it?" Well it took three long years and I ended up going to every county in the state to talk to the people in the agencies that would be affected about the benefits of going to a workforce program. I remember saying repeatedly, "All of you will probably object at this point because of changes in your life, but in five years, you'll say well it's working pretty well. And in ten years you won't even remember there was a different program." Do you know what? That's kind of been the truth.

I remember a lot of trips. I didn't have a driver. The Governor did. I remember one day starting at nine o'clock in Roosevelt, then going to Vernal at eleven o'clock, then down to Moab at two o'clock, to Monticello at 4 o'clock, and then to Blanding at eight o'clock. The meeting was over at ten and I got back at

about three in the morning. So it was kind of a hectic pace, covering every county and listening to their complaints and their reasons. But generally, the state employers were wonderful. It was a very rewarding experience.

One of the great experiences as Lieutenant Governor was being involved in the Olympics and what a great event that turned out to be. I remember of struggling how we should change after the negatives came out about bribes that had taken place forever and probably still take place, but we knew we had to make a change. So that was rather traumatic, but when the Olympics arrived, it's one of the events that I can look back and I can't think of anything I would change in the actual running of the Olympics. We had so many volunteers step forth and say, "Can I help?" They made the difference. The weather was great for all events. I went from early in the morning to late in the evening because we had twenty-seven countries set up, events in different restaurants and homes to welcome their Olympic participants. I kind of had the responsibility of covering all twenty-seven. That's a pretty hard assignment, but what a wonderful one.

I think I went to every event except the curling. They were all exciting. I gave some flowers at the events and it was always a thrill. The evening events worked out well. I thought the city looked great. I remember Mitt determined there wasn't money to put banners along North Temple—that they had to do something else. Somebody came up with the idea of covering the buildings with sheets showing the different Olympic events. What a marvelous idea. It was far more impressive than banners along North Temple would have been. It was an exciting time. I remember the Closing ceremony, walking out with the U.S.

member of the Olympic team, from New York. She said, “You know, Olene, there will never be another Olympic like this one.” I said, “Why?” She said, “Usually, at the march in the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the participants from different countries you’ll see them kind of grudgingly marching through. But in Salt Lake there were groups of people that cheered for every team and you could just see their faces light up and beam because they had a group of supporters somewhere in the audience.” Now, the only logical answer is the LDS send out missionaries, many from Utah and they were there to cheer for the country they went to. But it did make a difference and it was noticeable. It was a great event.

I was very, very fortunate to be involved in it. I knew it was successful the first day because I had encouraged all of my children and their families to get tickets. I remember getting a call from my daughter, Lori, who I had encouraged to go up to Park City to see the ski jump four hours early. I felt that traffic was such, that security had been so enhanced because of 9-11. It was a time when we had to increase security unbelievably and it became a real concern for the Olympics to have extreme conservative action in providing security where no chances would be taken. So I told her it would take an hour or two hours to get through security, then to find a parking place and get there. I said four hours. Well, I got a call from Lori, who said, “We’ve driven up, we’ve been through security, we’re now in our places and we have two and a half hours to wait until the Olympic event starts.” I just knew it was a success at that point. So it was a great event.

I enjoyed being Lieutenant Governor. Many times you work hard and somebody on a project, such as workforce, or health care, and others may have gotten the credit, but to see those programs work out was really rewarding. I also was included in many activities. I was involved in interviewing the judges, for example. They were done very carefully, with a great deal of thought because we realized in appointing judges, you're appointing people for the rest of their lives. They're in a position to judge in many peoples lives what happens. So we wanted to make certain that we selected the best person that we could. I will tell you that we would have interviews and many discussions afterward, trying to determine who that person was.

Also, I ended up sitting in on all the budget hearings of the agency, which was an advantage because I got to know the budget very well and in the Legislature I had focused on budget. So it wasn't a boring experience. It was a learning experience and hearing what was priority in the agency—it was the best way, I think, anyone could ever have of finding out how the agency works and what their priorities happen to be and what they were doing, which was another real advantage.

During that period of time, ironically, I was elected as Chairman of the Lieutenant Governors nationally and we had one of the national conventions here, mainly at the Stein Erickson's Ski Lodge at Park City. Then I was elected as the national President of the Secretary of States. It's the only time a Lieutenant Governor has ever been elected in that position. Quite frankly it was because two secretaries of state really wanted the position. It became such a

political controversy that they decided, “Now, who can we elect that will be accepted by everyone.” So I ended up as President of the organization which was a great experience. We had a great conference here at the time and it was very rewarding. I did work again, a lot with volunteerism and actually got the National Award for being the outstanding volunteer person in the nation. So it was a rewarding experience. I felt that it was a great opportunity to learn and understand the different agencies of the government. I had looked at them from the legislative point of view, but now I had the opportunity of looking at it from the executive point of view.

SL: What was it like working with Mike Leavitt?

OW: It was interesting. I think we work very well together. He was clearly the Governor and made decisions, but in our discussions I was included in all the meetings. If I disagreed, I felt very comfortable in disagreeing and giving the reasons. There are numerous times when he listened. Many times decisions were made as a result of those discussions. Clearly he was the boss. He had a great sense of the political part of being governor and he was very acute and able to pick moments for the press and to pick moments, even in some of his speeches to make high points for the press. We basically agreed on most every decision. But there are some decisions—for example, he mentioned that he was going to appoint someone to a major position as department head. I disagreed. We discussed it thoroughly, brought the staff in to discuss, and in the end, he agreed that it should be a different person. So there were many cases where we’d discuss a decision to be made and he would listen to the advice that he got.

SL: What do you think is your legacy of being Lieutenant Governor?

OW: I think two or three things—certainly, the Department of Workforce Development is a legacy because, I don't know whether people still remember all the work that went in to getting it started or not, but there was a lot of work. I think the Children's Health Insurance Program is a legacy. I think volunteerism throughout the state is a legacy. I'm not sure how long these legacies last because I already feel that they are probably disappearing. I think the Rainy Day Fund has become a legacy. There are other bills, such as the one that I got through in my first session, right at the end of the last day, that the state should fund prisoners housed at the county level. It's still in existence and some people still refer back to when it was first funded. I think all of those are legacies. Certainly, the election—we have an outstanding election office and have had since I was involved with the two federal bills. I think that's a legacy we can be very proud of. Certainly, in a sense, public lands, has a certain legacy.

We were there when the Escalante Staircase was made and that in itself was an experience because the week before we had heard rumors that something was going to happen. We called the White House. I was in Governor Leavitt's office twice when he called. They said, "Oh, that's just a rumor. We'll let you know when it's going to happen." Well, all of the sudden, he got a call what was back in New York at two o'clock in the morning telling him that they were going to announce the Escalante Staircase Monument of over 1.5 million acres in Southern Utah the next day. He didn't invite any of us to go to Arizona. The announcement was made near the Grand Canyon. My good friend, Norma

Matheson was invited. Of course, there was a lot of anger after it was announced, especially in those areas where it took so many acres. It was by far the largest monument in the country with the exception of Alaska that was considered. When the word came that the reason it was considered was because Nader was gaining ground in California and it was an election and Clinton had to do something to stop that growth, something dramatic for the environmentalists. His answer was the Escalante Staircase. I remember that many areas of Southern Utah wanted us to go to court over it. We had people thoroughly research it and it became clear that the state wouldn't win. They were still angry. I remember, the Governor said, "You go to Escalante to a meeting because they're so angry that they'll be kinder with you, a woman-grandmother type, than they will with me." So I went down to Escalante and they were angry, but they were kind to me. They wanted to leave the United States and set up their own state and there was a lot of anger. I remember going down in Kane County with the county clerk. Her family had worked for a hundred years to build up some of the grazing lands and they were included in national monument. In Henrysville, at first the whole town was taken in the monument. But when they realized that they'd taken a very small community, they ended up drawing the monument around with an outlet so they wouldn't take the town. But there were some areas like that where there were really angry people. Some of them are still angry.

That really intensified the public lands debate. As a result, we worked to try and solve it. We worked on the western half of the state and met with all these communities and worked with them and did really well, thinking that we would

solve at least the problem in the western half of Utah, designating a lot of it as wilderness, but putting other lands back in the private sector. When we got to Washington County, there was such a dispute over an area of cactus that the negotiations dissolved and it didn't happen. But it was an interesting experience. It was interesting because we got to know all the county commissioners and listen to arguments and look at the land more seriously, which proved to be a real value in one of my initiatives when I became governor.

SL: Other than the public lands, was there any other Federal government involvement that you had to deal with?

OW: I dealt with them on elections and worked a great deal on looking—just before I ceased to be Lieutenant Governor—looking at all the voting machines out there and looking at the issues that made it difficult for the states to operate, the expenses and looking at new machines because all of the sudden many companies developed new machines. There was a great deal of work from Washington with the states trying to solve the problems with elections. I probably had more contact with the Federal Government, as Lieutenant Governor, in that area than any other area.

SL: Let's talk about how you became Governor.

OW: Well, I think I was one of five people that knew, probably in July of 2003, that Mike had been asked to go and serve with the EPA. But Mike felt that it was an advantage for no one to know it until he was actually appointed. So for some political reason, no one talked about it even though I knew it. That was most difficult because I felt I needed to be organizing or taking over, but really couldn't

because he had asked me not to mention it to anyone. So that was a difficult time. I think from being in the Legislature, and from being Lieutenant Governor for over ten years, I understood most of the problems and issues that were important, especially those that I felt there were some solutions to. We were still living under tight budgets, because after 9-11 in 2002 the economy virtually stopped. If you think of it, for a week, no planes flew, the Wall Street financial area of New York was virtually destroyed and people were just hanging on. It was a survival time. It was a time of very low growth, the rest of 2002 and much of 2003. So I was very aware of the budget problems. We had emerged from a slow economy but 9-11 just changed that and sent the economy in a down turn. I looked at budgets a great deal during that time.

Finally I ended up going to Russia and to Kurkistan. In a way, it was a relief to move away because there was talk that Mike might be selected but we had to keep very quiet. I ended up going to Moscow, Russia because while the Olympics was here, Governor Leavitt, and Mayor Luzhkov from Moscow had made an agreement to have a Junior Olympics. In other words, we would send our young people of high school age to Moscow for a summer Olympics and then they would come back for a winter Olympics. So we sent those young people and apparently they spent six or seven million dollars on the event, and it took place in June of 2003. So when the news kind of got out that [Governor Leavitt] may go to the EPA, he wanted verification that I would honor the commitment. I looked at the budget and there wasn't money for it. Governor Leavitt said the Sports Authority would raise the money but he wanted a commitment that we would hold

the winter Olympics. As I looked at the budget, I realized they couldn't possibly raise enough money to do what they had done in Moscow. It seemed logical to me to have the athletes stay in homes to get to know the American people when they came. I wanted to negotiate with Mayor Luzhkov to have that happen. The reason there was a problem—the coaches felt they would lose control of their young people and they wanted them on a strict schedule of when they went to bed, they wanted them on a strict diet of what they could eat and so they wanted them all to stay at hotels. So my husband and I went to Moscow and met with Mayor Luzhkov. It was interesting because we got a grand reception when we got to the airport. I will always remember going to the government headquarters in Moscow in a car with a police escort, one in front, two on the sides, two in back, but they'd use the sirens for people to move over. When they wouldn't they had long sticks they'd put out the window going sixty miles an hour through the traffic of Moscow to get them to move over. It was a ride I'll never forget.

Anyway, we talked and we sat at a long table, Myron and I on one side and probably fifteen Moscow top officials on the other side. Through interpreters we talked various issues. He agreed to have the athletes stay in homes and was very pleasant. I had previously talked to the ambassador from Kurkistan, who had invited me to the—I think it was the 900th birthday of the country. Of course, I, at first, thought I couldn't go and when I found out I was going to Moscow, I thought 'how far can Kurkistan be?' They were once part of the Soviet Union. So I told them I would come. I found out they were a long way from Moscow. I went to Kurkistan and it was an unbelievable visit. A very poor country, a lot of poverty,

but none of it visible, like in so many other countries. I was treated royally there so it was a great visit. It took me away from the silent issue of when Mike was going to leave, when the Governor was going to be appointed.

I began to think of those things that needed to be done and how they could be implemented. So finally, when it was announced in November, that he was going to leave the first part of November or the last part of October, we were somewhat prepared for it. We kind of had a joint farewell to Governor Leavitt and my inauguration and it worked out, I thought, wonderfully well. It was a very special event in my life and it was held at the State Capitol. His farewell speech was held the evening before. In a sense, it was a routine inauguration. In another sense, it was very special because it was the first time a woman had become Governor in the State of Utah and it was under unique situations. I immediately began to work because I had this strong, strong feeling that I needed to prove that a woman could be Governor.

SL: Who was part of your inauguration?

OW: The chorus from the University of Utah sang. I thought of having the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and I thought, 'no, I've represented the University of Utah for my legislative years.' They did a great, great job. Of course, it became an issue of who I appointed Lieutenant Governor and I'll mention that. But it was a good event.

SL: And didn't a female judge swear you in?

OW: Yes, Christine Durham. As far as we know, that's the only time it's ever happened.

SL: Why don't you talk a little bit about your time as Governor?

OW: Okay. I thought I would just jump from here into picking Lieutenant Governor.

SL: Okay, that's great.

OW: It was a hard decision, at that time, to pick a Lieutenant Governor. There were several very capable individuals who wanted to be Governor. The head of the Republican Party, because it was in an election system coming up, suggested that I not pick someone that was going to be a candidate for Governor. My natural inclination would have been to pick Nolan Karras, but he was running for Governor and would have been an excellent Governor. I ended up picking Gayle McKeachnie, who I'd served in leadership with my third term in the Legislature, primarily because I knew I wanted to do something with public lands. He was from Vernal and had been involved in the issue and almost was looked at as the guru of rural Utah. That was really the basic reason. In retrospect, I should have maybe picked someone with a greater political aspiration to that selection. But it was strictly to get important issues done. He is an individual with unquestionable integrity and respected by everyone that knew him, so it was a good decision. It may not have been a political decision.

I immediately enumerated the fourteen issues I'd selected to be accomplished during my time as Governor. There were a lot—also all the regular issues of meeting people, of facing a legislative session. I had to get a budget out almost immediately. But it wasn't extremely difficult because I had sat through all the budget hearings as Lieutenant Governor. That was a great asset. Secondly, we didn't have a great deal of money. One of my initiatives was to do something

for education. I felt that education had been cut and that we were in last place in per pupil expenditures, which I thought for a state that thought education was important, was regrettable. Even more important, I understood that during the nineties, we had been in the top ten of personal income going to education. So I could always say, even though we are last, we put more effort into funding it. It's because of the great number of students. But by 2003, we had slipped significantly from being in the top ten and we were just below the national average in percent of income going to public and higher education. One of my first efforts and most concentrated efforts was to do something for education.

I looked and searched and determined the best thing I could do was start with the real basics—reading. So we started the program of reading with your child to get greater influence. One thing in the budget, I looked at every place for money that it could be funded. I even took a staff person that had been helping Governor Leavitt keep articles for the archives and all the paper press, etcetera, and put him in an open position in the agency. I likewise took one of the individuals that was at the Governor's mansion and put them in a different agency to get money to fund thirty million to get reading specialists at schools in K-3, really realizing how important reading was. You learn to read K-3 and after third grade you read to learn and too many of our students were not reading at the third grade level when they left third grade. So that became one of my strong initiatives.

I knew that it couldn't just be in the budget, that the public had to buy in to helping K-3 students read. So I had a group that worked on a project. We worked

on the motto "20 minutes to success." The message was that it is very important to read twenty minutes. We even argued and debated and discussed the twenty minutes because at first we were saying an hour and we all realized that's not going to happen, let's make it a half hour, but the hour seemed long. Twenty minutes seemed doable in every family. So we designated reading with a child twenty minutes a day. I also realized that we needed PR. We needed to get the message out. So I called a large group of people to volunteer money. I thought if we got at least $250,000, we could do some press, some of it free, we could put up a few billboards, we could work with community groups. Quite frankly, it may have been aimed a little more at the Hispanic population because they did not have a tradition of reading with their children.

That volunteer effort from non profits—the focus was to get the message out. It was very successful because we ended up with over a million dollars from the private sector. We had KSL take it on as a project and really did a lot of free advertising. We got billboards paid for giving the slogan to the people. Bob Garff [of The Ken Garff Automotive Group] got involved and he still is funding it. He gives over a million dollars every year to fund a 'success' for high school students. There a Road to Success and a Key to Success that developed from that first effort of reading. Seagull Book funded a summer reading program for the total state that they gave rewards to the students, published materials for the students—it was amazing. I consider it one of the most successful initiatives I started because part of it is still going.

The first initiative was actually something that probably no one expected from me. It was in technology and in dealing with the inoperability between state, local, and federal governments. The need was highlighted by two things. Earlier I had been Chair of the Criminal and Juvenile and I remember several times talking to the leaders of those departments saying, “What are your real needs?” It was always we’re on different wave lengths of communicating between the state, federal, and local. They were always going to work it out but it didn’t happen.

When I was Lieutenant Governor we’d had a tornado. Now I didn’t think Utah had tornados, but we had a tornado. I couldn’t do anything at the State Capitol so I had walked down to the Convention Center where the reports were that an individual had been killed. Actually I started to go by myself but pretty soon security caught up with me and said, “We’re supposed to keep you from stepping on an electric line.” So they walked down with me. I got down there and I talked to the head of the department of Public Safety. I said, “What are your problems?” He said, “Everything is going well except we don’t know what the Federal Government is doing. We don’t know what the local government’s doing.” We still can’t communicate with each other. So I made the decision after that discussion that it was finally going to get done. This was in November and I announced that by June it would be completed, thinking that I would put the pressure on and it did happen. I’m very proud of that initiative.

By the way, Commissioner Durden asked me if I wanted to follow the track of the tornado. I got in the helicopter and we went up over the hospital, over the Capitol, up to the high avenues where I lived, and all of the sudden I looked down

and found the roofs on the two houses on each side of mine were gone. There was probably more destruction in my immediate neighborhood than any place else in that city. So I asked him to put me down in the church parking lot and I ended up going from neighbor to neighbor to encourage them and find out the destruction. But anyway, that was an initiative that was completed.

There are fourteen of them. I don't know whether we have time to go through all of them but I will talk about a couple of others.

SL: Please, go ahead.

OW: On public lands—after the political conflicts that developed after the Escalante Staircase was announced, I wasn't certain that we could accomplish anything with public lands. But I remember a commissioners meeting here in St. George, where all the commissioners met. I went and gave them a proposal that I wanted one county, just one, to look at all the land in their area and determine, acre by acre, what the people of the county wanted their lands to be in the future. Now I said, "I don't want certain counties to even consider it." I mentioned San Juan and Grant and Emory and Kane because the conflicts there were so great, I didn't want them to mention it. I said, "I don't want counties like Box Elder to even do it because they have so few problems. They have such a small number of public lands compared to other counties." But I gave them a list of the counties I did want to consider it.

One of them was Washington County. I really had to almost plead with them to do it, but we got it started. The rules were the major parties had to be at the table, environmentalists had to be included, as well as commissioners, and

ranchers, and property owners. They had to stay at the table. They had to be able to make a decision. They couldn't go back to Washington to have the decision made. They had to be able to make the decision. They worked hard. We were very nurturing to both groups. I have to give Ted Wilson a lot of credit because he really helped with the environmentalists to get them there. Everyone was a little reluctant. I had hoped that we could get it done while I was Governor. The bill finally passed under Senator Bennett's sponsorship in 2009. But the work really started when I was Governor and as I left, Governor Bennett took over because it really had to go through the national legislature, Senate and House. It finally did.

Now, I always thought it would be model. It started so at least four or five counties were attempted to do what was done in Washington County. The Legislature, which had not been directly involved, passed legislation that no land could be considered without the input of the Legislature. For some reason, that kind of stymied the effort in the counties. Where it'll go, I don't know. But I felt it was a marvelous accomplishment to get at least one county through that process. We worked at it.

Perhaps the initiative that I spent the most time on was tax reform. The reason for tax reform was basically because of the volatility of the corporate and personal income tax to fund education. Utah is the only state that has designated corporate income tax and personal income tax as the sole revenue source for education. As a result, it is very volatile. In good times we get increases and in low times we have to cut programs. But the trend has been that in the good times

we cut the tax because we have extra revenues and so the next time in a downward turn of the economy, we go even lower and cuts have to be further made. We basically done it on the backs of increase class size in the public education system and cutting programs in the higher education system. Now originally, until the ‘90s, the personal income and corporate tax went to public education. But in the ‘90s we changed that law and included higher education. But what has happened as the higher education can use the income tax for revenue, they’ve taken money from what was originally going to higher education, put it in other state programs, primarily transportation and Medicaid, and so both public and higher education has suffered as a result of having the income tax as the sole funding of education.

I felt that to change this, we had to really look at tax policy. I had been part of a tax policy task force in the ‘80s, when I was in the Legislature. A lot of special interest people and lobbyists were included. As a result, not much was accomplished. The Truth in Taxation bill was passed, as well as a Tax Review Commission was established. As far as really changing and developing tax policy, it didn’t happen. So realizing that time was short, I gathered a group of tax experts in the State of Utah—and we have one of the most prominent tax policy experts in Gary Cornia, who is now Dean of the Marriott School of Management at BYU. I gathered all those individuals that I thought had expertise and rather than making them a tax task force, which means they’d be in an open meeting—which I’ve always supported—but in this case, I knew the time was short and there were a lot of very tough decisions that needed to be made to change tax

policy. So I gathered this group together, some staff people, some people that had been prominent in the legislative process and some from the academic world to make decisions. This was a totally voluntary effort. We often started at five or six at night and often went to two and three in the morning. Then people had to go back to their normal jobs. We had practitioners. We had academics. We had Leo Manment who had been over the legislative staff for so many years. We had Gary Doxey, my Chief of Staff; Lynn Ward, who was Assistant Chief of Staff, but had been over the office of budget and planning for years. Altogether we really worked on developing a tax policy that was as far and just as we could make it. They set goals. They set recommendations. Our plan was to present it to the Legislature prior to their running for office. Well, when it came prior to their running for office, the issue becomes so critical that we decided to wait until after some of the primaries had been over and conventions had been over to announce the results. We did. We tried to work and education legislators. We met with all the editorial boards of papers and tried to get the information out. Again, we had done so much modeling and data mining, to make certain that it was a fair and just tax—neither raising or lowering tax—that we thought it would have some serious discussion. There were many things in there that we knew was political and negatives and there would be people against it. We felt that they had to use the positive aspects of the tax reform to justify it. The motto tended to become lower rates, broader base. With that we announced the program and it immediately became a discussion of the election cycle. After I was Governor we hoped it would carry on. But it soon became far more political.

Governor Hunstman—we felt we had invited him to all the meetings as well as his opponent in the Republican Party, Nolan Karras. They knew the plan fairly well besides Keith Prescott, who had been for years the Huntsman accountant, was on the committee and knew it very well. But politics is politics and it soon became a question not of lowering the rates—that became the important question without broadening the base. So it became a question of simpler laws and getting rid of the food tax. I would love to have gotten rid of the food tax but it's folly to go in that direction if you don't broaden the base so it compensated. Nevertheless, that's the way it ended up. It became very politicized and they did the political easy things to do that please most of the public and none of the harder things to do. You know, some of them I'd say they needed to be done. But without broadening the base, we'll eventually run into great trouble. So that was a major imitative.

Some of the others I'll just quickly mention. It was to have greater economic development come from the universities, especially the research universities. It's developed into the U Star Program, which is really flourishing and has done well. Another one was to develop the Trade Center and it was just dedicated on South Temple a short time ago, so it's taken years and years to become a reality. Another was to develop water sheds. I'd actually been on the Department of Interior to pick a location, get the word out and get started. Well, I will remember the time that they held a press conference to announce it. I walked in rather late, just before they started it and looked it up on the map on the wall. They had a third of Utah designated to improve the watershed. Truthfully, I've

never been more speechless because I didn't know whether to say, "This is too much, we can't even begin to do that," or say, "Let's postpone the press conference." But everybody was there. So we went ahead. They had included the Sevier drainage area and if you look at that, it's huge. But in every one of these sections, we had people working on improving the watershed and it has made a difference. There's still a lot to be done but a lot did get done. Most of these were exciting. Another one was to have the 211 number available to all of Utah to find out where human services could be received for the first time.

We worked hard in the short time that I was Governor. In fact, quite truthfully, I think I neglected the politics. The politics only became important because I had to make a decision. Do I try to run again as Governor? I knew that if I announced it before we had the legislative session in 2004, that it would be a disaster because there were so many people running for Governor, as was the Speaker of the House and many senators. I just knew that it would have additional problems so I made the determination to wait until after the legislative session. It was an interesting session. I had to work hard to get my thirty million for reading, but did get it. It was a positive.

When I announced, I knew that I would have a hard time. I was aware that, for example, that John Huntsman had been working for three years, entertaining delegates at his Park City cabin, which was a huge home, very impressive. Others had put unbelievable amounts of money already into the system. I thought if I was careful, I could run at least through the convention for two hundred and fifty thousand. I was wrong. It did cost more. I felt an obligation

again because I didn't know at that time, of any other woman who could be in the hunt to win as Governor. Too often, as women, we have failed to step up and take the risk, and so for that reason I determined to run for Governor. I didn't want to spend a huge amount of money, even thought I knew that there were several people that had spent huge amount to get through the caucus and the convention and were running. I determined at least I would be able to be competitive at that point. Quite frankly I had a remarkable approval rating in the press. I think one time it even went up to 87%, which is unbelievable. So I did run. I think I remember some articles. I remember LaVarr Webb wrote an article that said, "The problem with Governor Walker is that she's too interested in getting the tax reform bill through, and as a result has little time for politics." You know, in a way that was a compliment. I think that was the case, that I was focused on getting these initiatives accomplished or at least started sufficiently that they would happen. I saw that as the major role rather than being political. There is a difference because if you really are in the political arena with the attempt to make certain or hope to be elected, you have to do the things that in people's eyes are positives. I was doing some things that were absolutely necessary but weren't all positives—especially with tax policy. They were a wise decision for the long run. Politically, it was better to do tax policy for the short term and get the credit rather than broadening the base. A perfect example is the food tax. That can't help but be positive in most people's mind. The negative part of it is that they ended up narrowing the base instead of making it broader. As a result, the election results were not what I wanted but they were what I expected.

SL: So what do you think, overall, is your legacy in politics and in the State of Utah?

OW: I think my legacy is—I hope it is—that I'm an individual that looks at what is right and good for the State of Utah, rather than a politician that just does what he or she thinks will get them elected the next time. I think I had a great advantage in the Legislature of doing that. On the other hand, I had the disadvantage of being a Republican in the Democratic area. That's hard to do in Utah, very few places could you do that. I think my legacy will be that I cared about policy and laws but cared about people. I think that many of the bills I carried had to do with, for example, foster children. One of my initiatives was for encouraging and finding ways to have foster children that didn't get adopted, to get education to a greater degree.

I remember the first time I spoke to the group and asked how many planned on graduating from high school. An unbelievable—maybe five hands went up out of eighty. The last time I spoke to them, I bet 80% of the hands went up that they were working on education. After I became Governor, a group of my friends started a project to give scholarships to foster children. Now these are children that leave the state system, not adopted, no family, and they made them five thousand dollar scholarships because they don't have homes. They have to find a place to live. They have to have enough to get an education. But every year they fund fifteen of these scholarships. It's called the Olene Walker Foster Children Scholarship. I'm very proud of that. That's the kind of legacy I hope that I'm remembered for. The Olene Trust Fund for Affordable Housing as I mentioned, is in that category. But I hope I'm remembered as being fiscally

conservative and sound and knowledgeable about budget and tax policy, but very concerned about people, children, education, all those issues that are so critical to the people of the State of Utah.

It's hard to think of leaving a legacy. I think more, maybe, of leaving a legacy in my family because I have seven children and twenty-five grandchildren, and now seventeen great grand children. I'm hoping a legacy there has been established of being productive, contributing citizens. To be givers and not takers—that they need to make certain that their community or their state or their nation is better because they're part of it. I hope I've instilled that legacy in them. That would be the same I would like to leave for everyone in the state, as a positive, productive state.

SL: What was the driving force for you to create the Walker Institute at Weber State?

OW: Truthfully, after I became Governor, I realized that I had some papers that needed to be located some place. I would be the first to admit that while Governor Mike Leavitt did a marvelous job of having people involved and he was involved in collecting papers, notes, information, gifts, everything to be put in a museum that was built in Cedar City. It's perfect for his collection. As Governor I was not that involved. In fact, I moved the people that were involved in his efforts into different efforts so I could get money for the reading program. But as I've gotten older, I realize I needed to make a decision of where the few things I had were housed. But more important to me was the fact that I wanted to do something for students in the community. My ties to Cedar City were minimal. I got asked to leave them at the University of Utah but the University of Utah had

the Hinckley Institute, which is funded to far greater extent than anything I could ever do with students or community. I graduated from BYU but they have policies that require so much approval in the line of authority that I felt it would be difficult to start an Institute and develop the programs that you wanted to. Because Weber State University had mentioned that they would like to have my papers and whatever I planned on doing for students and community as part of their institute, it became a logical decision. My family lived there all their lives. My parents and actually my father lived and died in the same home that he had always been in and they were such an integral part of the community. I felt that that was the best place to start an institute for students and the community, as well as leaving what little I had at the library in terms of documents and papers. Somehow I decided one thing I've got to do is get a lot of the information off of my computer and give that information to Sarah for Special Collections. Some time I will do that.

SL: What do you hope the institute will be able to do—especially for students?

OW: I see them doing several things in several different areas. I see them having four major speakers or panels a year that invite the public on current issues that are critical to the local, state, or national arena. I see them enhancing their internship programs to having a regular course each semester to train interns. I see them expanding the intern program into businesses, non profits, and especially in the local government, state government, and the national government. I am concerned when I hear that BYU and Utah, both of whom I love, get twenty-five interns to be placed at the State Legislature but Weber only gets three. Partly it's

because of the training and the effort to have them placed. That's something that I see the Walker Institute focusing on. I think having brown bag discussions, at least on a monthly, if not a weekly basis for students on issues that confront them or the community—and when I say community it's basically Weber, Davis, Morgan, and Box Elder Counties—I see those happening to bring the students together and understand that—again, as I said about my children, they have to be givers. They have to help solve problems and be involved. They cannot all be takers from government programs but they have to be producers. So that's kind of the mentality. I see them having workshops for people that want to run for office and then workshops for those that are elected to the office, be it commissioner, legislature, library board, school board—workshops in all those areas to better train people about their responsibilities of being elected. I see it as a focus for community activity in those areas, maybe better planning for the areas, but certainly an involvement of students and the community. Pretty broad basis, but a lot of specific things also.

SL: Did you have anything else that you wanted to talk about?

OW: I just want to say thank you for being here and getting this history. I've always been proud of my background in Ogden. When people have asked me where I'm from, I've always said Ogden, Utah. I had a kind of a remarkable childhood growing up with pressure to learn but the usual fun freedom of going any place I wanted to, feeling safe in a rural setting and having close enough neighbors to play games but yet space to roam and explore. I'm very proud to see how Weber has grown from the campus that I went to—one square block in downtown

Ogden to a beautiful, magnificent campus on the foothills. I'm hoping that the Walker Institute of Policy and Public Service will continue to grow and become so established it becomes a critical part of the university campus at Weber. I'm excited because I think we're getting a stable start. I've been amazed at the donations that have been made and it's really been exciting to be involved in developing this project. Thank you.

SL: Thank you, Olene.