



“FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE”

A Conversation with Former Governor John Anderson, Jr.

edited by Bob Beatty

John Anderson, Jr., a native-born Kansas Republican, served as the state's thirty-sixth chief executive from January 9, 1961, to January 11, 1965. However, his experience in Kansas public life goes much deeper than his two terms as governor. Anderson served as Johnson County attorney from 1947 to 1953 and was elected to the Kansas Senate in 1952. In the legislature, Anderson was part of a reform-minded group called "The Young Turks," who backed the maverick Republican, Governor Fred Hall, and opposed the so-called "Right to Work" law. In 1956 Governor Hall appointed Anderson attorney general for the state of Kansas to fill the unexpired term of Harold Fatzer, and Anderson won election to that office in 1956 and 1958. In 1960 Anderson defeated the two-term Democratic incumbent George Docking for the governor's chair, with 55 to 44 percent of the popular vote, and won reelection in 1962, defeating his general election challenger Dale Saffels, 53 to 46 percent.¹

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1. Homer E. Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 209–11; see R. Alton Lee, *Farmers vs. Wage Earners: Organized Labor in Kansas, 1860–1960* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 247–82, for discussion of the right-to-work issue; Secretary of State, *State of Kansas, Election Statistics, 1960, Primary and General Elections* (Topeka: State Printing Plant, [1961]), 68; Secretary of State, *State of Kansas, Election Statistics, 1962, Primary and General Elections* (Topeka: State Printing Plant, 1963), 60. The governor, his wife, Arlene Anderson, and their three children were the first of Kansas's first families to take up residence at Cedar Crest, which became the Kansas executive mansion in April 1962. They moved from the old mansion at 801 Buchanan, which was an old Victorian house that had been purchased by the state in 1901. "Anderson Family Completes Move," *Topeka Capital Journal*, April 22, 1962, and other items in "State Building Clippings," vol. 2, 1957–1983, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; Karen Carlin and Robert W. Richmond, ed., *Kansas First Families at Home: Residences, Residents and Recipes* (Topeka, Kans.: Friends of Cedar Crest Association, 1982), 1–6.

Generally amiable relations between the executive branch and the legislature, allowing for significant reform legislation in several important areas, marked Anderson's four years in office. In the field of education, substantial increases in funding were enacted for all grade levels in the state, especially community colleges and K-12 schools, and Wichita State University was added to the state Board of Regents system. A state technical institute was also established in Salina and a number of vocational-technical schools were opened. Most dramatically, Anderson led the way for significant school consolidation, which resulted in the reorganization of public schools from over one thousand into a little over three hundred unified districts. Other initiatives during Anderson's term were the public employee retirement fund, reorganization and expansion of the state's medical and mental health program, reform of the state pardon and parole system, and new highway construction. Although Kansas had a program in place providing assistance for children of low-income families, Anderson began a new fund for this program—separate from the general fund—in order to receive federal matching funds. The fight for civil rights was an important issue nationally during Anderson's time as governor, and during his tenure he expressed his support for improving race relations in Kansas. In fact, it was a key part of his 1961 inauguration speech and occupied considerable legislative time and attention throughout the Anderson administration.²

Despite this cooperative atmosphere, however, Anderson was not immune to the divide between conservatives and moderates that is still evident in the Kansas Republican Party today. Party leaders denied him a position as a voting delegate to the 1964 Republican Presidential Nominating Convention because Anderson supported the moderate Nelson Rockefeller over the conservative Barry Goldwater.

This article is excerpted from two interviews conducted with John Anderson, Jr., in December 2003 and December 2006. Interviewer questions have been omitted, and footnotes have been added to provide further explication of topics and relevant source citations. Video footage and a complete transcript of the

2. Anderson said: "The forward push of certain minority groups for equal places in our society have been [sic] greatly dramatized in recent years in the southern states. . . . America is moving forward into an era of greater opportunity for some groups and less privilege for other groups. Kansas will not escape this mighty force." For the entire speech and information on all these issues and many more, see *Inaugural Address of Governor John Anderson, Jr., Monday, January 9, 1961* (Topeka: State of Kansas, State Printer, 1961), 5; for Anderson's first message to the Kansas Legislature, see, *Senate Journal*, January 12, 1961 (Topeka: State Printer, 1961), 8-18; see also the extensive Correspondence of the Governor's Office, Governor John Anderson, January 9, 1961-January 11, 1965, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka (hereafter, Anderson Papers, KSHS).

December 15, 2003, interview, which was part of a series of conversations with Kansas's six surviving governors, are available at <http://www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2007winter.htm>.³ The overall project that gave rise to the interviews was an initiative by Bob Beatty and Mark Peterson from the political science department of Washburn University to capture on video the oral histories of Kansas governors John Anderson, William Avery, John Carlin, Mike Hayden, Bill Graves, and Kathleen Sebelius.⁴ "For the Benefit of the People': A Conversation with Former Governor John Anderson, Jr." is the first in a series of articles based on those interviews.

BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

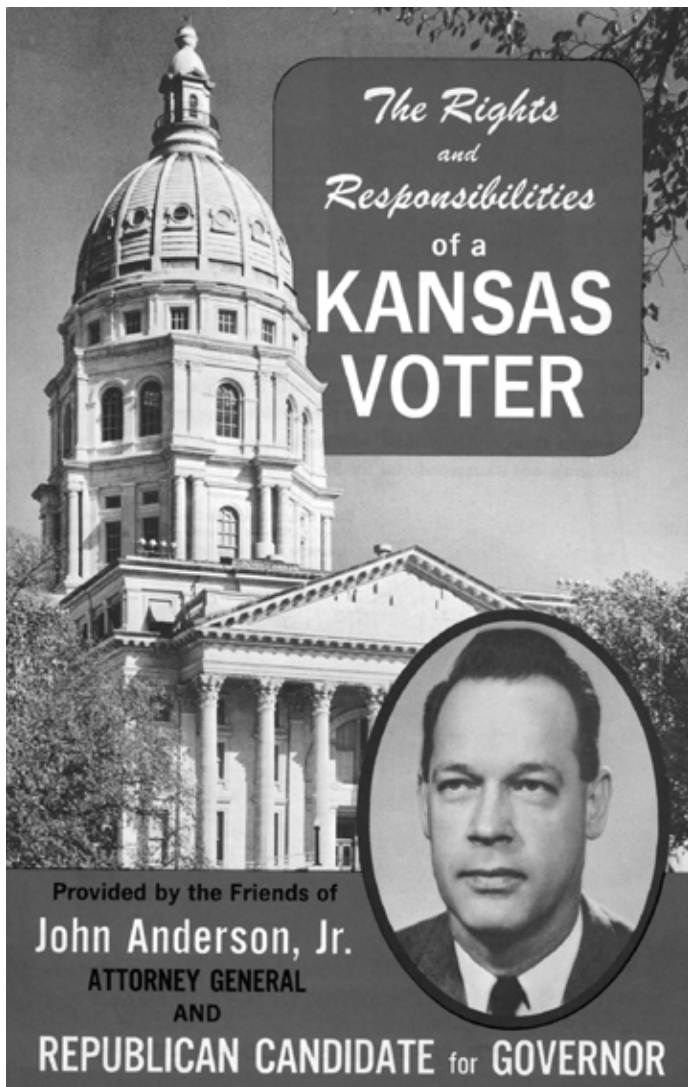
I was born on a farm on May 8, 1917, located north of Olathe. I attended grade school at Cherry Lane Grade School and that was one room, one teacher for eight grades. I attended high school in Olathe and graduated in 1935. The city of Olathe had a four thousand population in the entire city then. My father was a farmer and my mother was a housewife and mother and a wonderful one. My dad did sit on the school board of Cherry Lane School for many years and helped with the school work there. I wouldn't call that a political position, but certainly it's a position with responsibility and with the ability to help out. My dad farmed all of his life and milked dairy cows for a living and worked his way through the depression years of the 1930s by selling milk into Kansas City, Missouri. I helped milk those cows from the time I was five years old until I started college. I didn't start to college right out of high school. I laid out four years and stayed home on the farm. Then I enrolled at Kansas State College at Manhattan, took one year and then transferred over to KU [University of Kansas, Lawrence].⁵

When I lived at home on the farm I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian and take care of cattle and horses and animals of all kind. But my health problems intervened. I

3. For this published version of our conversation with Governor Anderson, the 2003 and 2006 interviews have been merged, and passages have been omitted and reordered in some instances for clarity and narrative effect. The words are the governor's, however, and the editor has not altered the meaning or original intent in any way.

4. *The Kansas Governor. A Behind the Curtain Look at the Chief Political Figure in the State*, DVD (Topeka: Washburn University and the Center for Kansas Studies, 2005).

5. Anderson came from a long line of Kansas farmers. His father's family started farming in Olathe at the turn of the twentieth century, and his mother's family moved to Kansas in 1858 and started a farm in Johnson County. The most detailed information on Anderson's family and his parents is found in "Gov. John Anderson, Up for Reelection, Retains Enthusiasm for Farming," *Wichita Sunday Eagle and the Wichita Beacon, Feature Magazine*, September 23, 1962.



A 1960 campaign pamphlet outlined Anderson's qualifications for the job of governor, and in November he defeated the two-term Democratic incumbent George Docking with 55 percent of the popular vote.

developed a heart murmur and I thought I didn't want to play with wild horses if I was going to have a heart problem. And so I transferred over to KU to go to law school and finished that in 1944. When I was in law school, the dean of the school recommended me as a law clerk to Judge Walter Huxman. He was governor of Kansas back in the 1930s and had been appointed to the Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States, which is just under the Supreme Court.⁶ I worked for him for two years as a law

6. Walter A. Huxman, a Democrat, served as governor of Kansas from 1937 to 1939 and as a federal district court judge from 1939 to 1964.

clerk right out of law school. It was a wonderful job. I was very fortunate in getting that position. My work was to take the cases that were brought on appeal to the Circuit Court from the district courts in the Federal system and when it was appealed and went to the Circuit Court they would come up through the court to the judge with docket papers being the record of the case, the transcribed pleadings, and the facts of the case. And all of those papers come to the judge and when they come in he would just hand them to me and say, "Work me up a brief and what you think would be a good opinion," and I would work each case up that way. It was a wonderful task. I don't know of a better starting post out of law school before you practiced law than to do that kind of work. Walter Huxman was a genuinely good person and I liked him very much. I got along with him very well and he liked me. I enjoyed that two years with him. I really did.

JOHNSON COUNTY LAWYER AND PROSECUTOR

In May of 1946 I decided to come back to Olathe and practice law. I ran for county attorney, which was a county prosecutor back in those days in the 1940s. The county attorney was also the legal advisor to all county offices, the county commission, and the other county officers like county clerk and superintendent of schools. I was the attorney for all of them, and also the prosecutor in the county. So I was the Johnson County attorney and prosecutor from 1947 to 1953.⁷ I received a fair amount of notoriety when I was county attorney that I think helped me when I later ran for statewide offices such as attorney general and governor.

I became pretty well known when I tried a murder case that made the news around the state for three weeks. It was against a lawyer named Casey Jones. The charge was second-degree murder for an incident that happened in 1952 [*sic*].⁸ Jones was a lawyer in Johnson County and

In the latter position he played a key role in the lawsuit against the Topeka school district that led to the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*. For further information on Huxman, see Virgil W. Dean, "Walter A. Huxman: Leading by Example," *John Brown to Bob Dole: Movers and Shakers in Kansas History*, ed. Virgil W. Dean (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 217–27.

7. In a profile written of the governor-elect in 1960, Anderson is quoted as saying that he ran for county attorney "because that's a good way to start a law practice." From then on his political interest developed, and his mother was quoted as saying, "It just grew on him." See "Here's First Family," *Topeka State Journal*, November 9, 1960.

8. The incident in question actually took place during the early morning hours of January 20, 1950. W. C. "Casey" Jones, a forty-two-year-old Olathe attorney, who had also served the county as county attorney (1936–1939), probate judge (1939–1946), and legislator (1947–1949),

a very well-liked man by any standard. He had served in the state legislature and actually wanted to run for governor. He was a nice guy and I liked him. But, he made a big mistake. He was married with three children but also had a secretary that, shall we say, he was close to, and she was the daughter of a banker. He had the habit of going with some of his friends to Kansas City[, Missouri] for the weekends, since in those days there was no liquor in Kansas City, Kansas. And they would eat and drink whiskey all weekend and have quite a time. Those two or three men would go with their secretaries and do that, usually drinking much too much. Well, one night after drinking, Jones and his secretary headed home. Casey didn't want to get stopped by the police so he drove home via a side road. I think what probably happened is that the secretary opened the door of the car, Jones reached over, and the car went into the ditch, which was full of water. She had the door open and she got caught between the door and the door jam and by God it killed her.

Now, I could have charged him with negligent homicide. But he was drunk so I charged him with second-degree murder. Jones hired the best defense lawyer in the state and we tried the case. Thirteen days it went on and it was in every paper in the state every day. Actually, on the front page every day. So it became a statewide topic. That was close to the end of my term as county attorney. I ended up convicting him of negligent homicide with a vehicle, one degree less than what I charged him with, and it was seen as a real victory by many. That made my name statewide.⁹

I also tried a guy when I was county attorney for the murder of a deputy sheriff. His name was Merle Martin

and his thirty-one-year-old secretary, Dorothy M. Kellogg, were returning from Kansas City when he ran his car into a ditch near Lenexa; Miss Kellogg was killed, and Jones was charged with first degree manslaughter. "File on Jones," *Kansas City Star*, January 28, 1950, and other clippings in "Crime and Criminal Trials," Clippings, vol. 6, 1933-1951, 125, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; *1947 Kansas Legislative Directory* (Topeka: Kansas Business Magazine, 1947), 75.

9. This dramatic trial—held November 13 through November 21, 1950—certainly did attract statewide coverage and was even more sensational and controversial than described by Governor Anderson over fifty years after the fact. Despite the prosecution's best efforts, however, the jury found Jones guilty only of negligent homicide, and he was fined \$500, ordered to pay court costs (\$900), and "sentenced to serve three months in the Johnson County jail, then paroled on the condition that he refrain from using intoxicating beverages." The probation was to last for two years. "Parole to Jones," *Kansas City Star*, December 2, 1950, in "Crime and Criminal Trials," Clippings, 133; see also, among many others, "Seven Women on Jury In 'Casey' Jones Trial," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 14, 1950; "Witness Collapses on Stand In Jones Auto Death Trial," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 16, 1950; "Jones Is Guilty of Negligent Homicide," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 22, 1950.

and he ended up being executed in 1954. As they say, we hung him "with a rope until dead." Martin was a thief and he and some other guys liked to break into houses and steal jewelry and other valuables. Well, after one robbery they had stopped their car and were going through what they had stolen and while they were doing that a farmer called the Johnson County sheriff's office and reported them. A deputy sheriff went over there and they were stopped on a bridge. The deputy had a flashlight and he shone it at them and asked them some questions. Martin shot at the flashlight and killed him. I charged those guys with murder and convicted them. The triggerman, Martin, got death. By God that's what happened, he was executed.¹⁰ So that was another pretty well-known case. I prosecuted people who violated the law instead of patting them on the back and saying, "Don't do it again."

KANSAS SENATE AND GOVERNOR FRED HALL

When I was prosecutor I decided to keep a hand in politics, so I ran for the Kansas Senate. I was elected to the state senate in 1952 and took office in '53 and served in three sessions. By that time we had adopted a law for the state to provide for the budget sessions of the legislature and I think I was there for the first budget session. You see, the regular sessions were held every other year in the two-year terms and then the budget session provided for a one-month session every other year.¹¹ So I served three sessions, until 1956.

When I was in the Kansas Senate I was part of a group that was called the "Young Turks." It was John Woelk from Russell, me, and two other younger fellas in the senate. We would get together and talk about certain issues and then usually vote together. In a forty member senate a group like that can make a difference. Patronage and political deal-making and cronyism were a problem in Kansas

10. Merle William Martin, age forty-four, was executed by the state of Kansas at Lansing on July 16, 1954, for the murder of deputy sheriff Willard Carver, on June 23, 1952, near Zarah, Johnson County, Kansas. Martin's accomplice and brother-in-law, Charles W. Isgrigg, received a life sentence. See "Killer Admits Guilt, Hangs," *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 16, 1954. For some discussion of the death penalty in Kansas and a comprehensive listing of legal executions to 1950, see Louise Barry, "Legal Hangings in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 18 (August 1950): 279-301; Patrick G. O'Brien, "Capital Punishment: A Paradox in Kansas," *Kansas Peace Officer* 33 (September 1990): 48-49, 51.

11. Anderson resigned from the state senate on March 1, 1956, soon after the adjournment of the special budget session. State of Kansas, *Senate and House Journals, Proceeding of the Legislature of the State of Kansas, Budget Session, January 10 to February 8, 1956* (Topeka: State Printer, 1956); James W. Drury, with Marvin G. Stottlemire, *The Government of Kansas, Sixth Edition* (Lawrence: Public Management Center, University of Kansas, 2001), 39-40.



Anderson recalled that "Governor Fred Hall [pictured here] was a friend of mine and I had many political dealings with him . . . I helped him campaign when he ran for governor. He was able."

politics, and we had lawyers in the group, including me, and we wrote legislation to put a damper on the patronage. Indeed we did. And by God we passed the legislation and put a stop to those insider deals and even cut some of the worst ones down when they ran for office.¹²

The old guard opposed all this. They opposed legislation that would stop public officials from using their positions for private benefit. The truth of the matter is that we ended up winning by being patient. Within a few years they didn't have lawyers to fill the judiciary committee so

12. The two other "Young Turks" were Senator William D. Weigand (LaCrosse, Republican) and Senator John W. Crutcher (Hutchinson, Republican). See "Young Turks," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 29, 1959; *1955 Kansas Legislative Directory* (Topeka: Kansas Business and Construction Magazines, 1955), 49, 35.

they had to appoint us. And from there we could get some reforms passed.

Governor Fred Hall was a political friend of mine and I had many political dealings with him that you typically have. He came on the scene very fast. I helped him campaign when he ran for governor. He was able. You see, the political powers from the Governor Alf Landon period had controlled the Kansas Republican Party for years. Hall was able to break that all up as he was independent of what we called the "Old Guard" that usually selected the candidates that they wanted to run for the offices. He ran a good campaign, was personable, and attracted a lot of supporters and got good crowds on the campaign trail. But boy oh boy, the old group of Kansas GOP power brokers did not like Hall at all. He would not work with them and they really opposed him.¹³

As for the so-called "triple-play," where he [Hall] resigned the governorship and got himself appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court—which really caused a huge stink and led to changing how we pick Supreme Court judges here in Kansas—I still wonder why the hell he did that.¹⁴

13. Fred Hall, lieutenant governor (1951–1955) and governor (1955–1957), was one of the more controversial figures in recent Kansas history. In his January 10, 1955, inaugural address, the Dodge City Republican said, "I describe myself neither as a 'do-gooder' nor a 'do-nothing.' For lack of a better term I describe myself as a 'do-something.'" Hall did do something. He split the Kansas GOP by challenging the long-time leaders of the party. Anderson had an up-and-down relationship with Hall. Anderson worked to get Hall elected, championed many of Hall's reforms, and owed his appointment as attorney general to him.

Still, by the end of Hall's single term Anderson broke with the administration, publicly citing non-stop intra-party feuding. No doubt Hall's unpopularity in the party did not bode well for the politically ambitious Anderson. In the 1960 election George Docking tried to use this former friendship against Anderson, calling Anderson "Fred Hall's boy." "Docking Calls Foe 'Fred Hall's boy,'" *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 4, 1960; for the inaugural citation and more on Hall's tumultuous administration, see Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors*, 200–3; see also, "Republican Party, Clippings," vol. 16, 1959–1963, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

14. The "Triple Play"—also called the "triple jump" or "triple switch"—refers to one of the state's most notorious political maneuvers. Governor Hall ran for a second term in 1956, but he was rather soundly defeated in the August GOP primary by Topeka attorney Warren W. Shaw. When a friendly state supreme court justice, William Smith, conveniently resigned, Hall decided he wanted that position. He resigned as governor on January 3, 1957, only eleven days before his term ended. Lt. Governor John B. McCuish then assumed the office of governor and appointed Hall to a vacant court position. The political deal between Smith, Hall, and McCuish was hatched over a matter of days and the resignations of Smith and Hall, swearing in of McCuish, and appointment of Hall were all done within minutes of each other on January 3. The me-



In 1956 Anderson was appointed to the position of attorney general of the state of Kansas. He recalled that his years in this position helped to establish him as a "law enforcer," noting "I think that had something to do with winning the governorship in 1960, I'll say that humbly."

ATTORNEY GENERAL

In 1956 I was appointed by Governor Hall to the position of attorney general of the state of Kansas. I held that office under the unexpired term of Harold Fatzer, who was elevated to the state Supreme Court. I took his position, finished the term and ran for a regular term as attorney general. So I stayed in politics pretty well throughout the

dia was aghast, and most Republican officials boycotted the "festivities" surrounding the new governor. McCuish, who was reported to have a political future in the GOP, was severely damaged by the incident and never held office again. The "Triple Play" was a key impetus for Kansas changing to the Missouri Plan of appointing judges. For a detailed account of the politics and history of this political firestorm, see R. Alton Lee, "The Triple Switch: How the Missouri Plan Came to Kansas," *Journal of the Kansas Bar Association* 73 (January 2004): 28–37.

entire period from 1946. I served nearly five years as attorney general of the state and then ran for governor in 1960 in the fall election.

One of the first things that I did within a week after I was appointed as attorney general was to bring an action against a small finance company, enjoining them from collection of a promissory note that was given by a youngster that had been taken into the army. He bought a car and he just signed the papers they gave him and they charged him over 20 percent simple interest. It violated the usury laws of the state at the time. I tied that company up on that case and by the injunctive process I tied up every finance company that was financing automobiles. Commercial Credit was one of the big companies in that kind of business so I tied Commercial Credit up so they couldn't do any business in the state of Kansas until that was straightened out. The upshot of it was a lot of publicity and it affected the car dealers throughout the state and the sale of cars. We got the case straightened out here in court to put a stop to that and they gave the kid the car and they gave a whole series of other contracts that they had to the buyers because they had done the same thing to a number of people that bought brand new cars—and they just gave them their paper free. We cleaned out a lot of the actual overcharge and violations of usury laws. Then the motorcar dealers wanted a special session of the legislature and the governor called one. So, you see, all of that publicity had worked its way until I was pretty well known as a law enforcer. I think that had something to do with winning the governorship in 1960, I'll say that humbly.

GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN

I didn't give much attention to the idea of running for governor prior to the end of the second term that I was attorney general. But I had been attorney general five years and I thought that there was an opening and an opportunity to be governor and so I just elected to take it. I ran against George Docking in 1960 and he had held office for two terms. He was finishing his second term in 1960 and he ran for a third term and we never had had a third-term governor in Kansas before in one hundred years.¹⁵ So I

15. George Docking, a Lawrence banker, first ran as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1954, but he lost the November election to Fred Hall, 330,000 to 286,000. Two years later, however, after narrowly beating out former Governor Harry H. Woodring for the party nomination, Dock-

thought he was asking for more than his share and I decided to run. I had a lot of support. I had support from all over the state and it's only practical to think that the Republican Party wanted to get a Republican elected and defeat Docking for his third term as a Democrat. That's politics—pure politics—for the party members throughout the state to want to take over the highest office in the state. So I had support from everywhere throughout the state.¹⁶

I had a real tough primary. I ran against Huck Boyd [who] had been in politics as an activist, active in politics in the state for many years, and had served as state chairman of the Republican Party for a number of years. You know, in Kansas it's been a usual thing for a person to announce [his or her candidacy] on Kansas Day if he hasn't announced prior to that time as they've got a gathering of the party members on Kansas Day. I told the group that gathered on that Kansas Day meeting in Topeka, on Kansas Day of 1960, "I'll visit every county in the state of Kansas before the primary election in August." And I did. I tell you, it's a task, 105 counties and going into them! I would make two or three counties in one day when I drove on that state trip. But this state is two hundred miles wide and four hundred miles long and 105 counties. But I did it—I visited every single one of them in 1960 before the primary election.¹⁷

ing easily defeated the Republican candidate, Warren W. Shaw, for the governorship. When Docking was reelected in 1958, he became the first Kansas Democrat ever to win a second term in that office. Secretary of State, *Thirty-Ninth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, 1953-54* (Topeka, Kans.: State Printer, 1954), 25, 63; *Fortieth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, 1955-56* (Topeka, Kans.: State Printer, 1956), 33, 85; *Forty-first Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, 1957-58* (Topeka, Kans.: State Printer, 1958), 61; Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors*, 206-8; Herman D. Lujan, *Kansas Votes: National and Statewide General Elections, 1958-1964* (Lawrence: Governmental Research Center, University of Kansas, 1965), 23-24.


16. The Republicans indeed were determined to take back the governorship in 1960 and believed that one key was to stop the continual feuding within the party that had divided it during the Fred Hall years. To that end, the GOP primary candidates focused on attacking Governor Docking and refused to criticize each other while campaigning. In fact, all three candidates for the GOP nomination—Anderson, McDill "Huck" Boyd, and state representative William H. Addington—only stressed three main issues on the stump: education, the penal system, and lowering property taxes. See "GOP Candidates Alike on Issues," *Topeka State Journal*, August 1, 1960.

17. The results of the primary were: Anderson, 49 percent (128,081); Boyd, 44 percent (116,725); Addington, 7 percent (18,169). Anderson's narrow victory surprised many in the Kansas media, and no doubt in the Kansas GOP, since Boyd was a conservative newspaper editor well known in the party and backed by the traditional party elite. On August 4, 1960, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reported that Anderson "brought a new, slightly liberal look to the Kansas Republican party" and had "bucked the regular party organization. . . . 75 per cent or more of the top party leaders back Boyd." Anderson benefited greatly from being so well known in populous Johnson County, carrying most of the state's urban areas, which offset Boyd's rural strength. "Suburban Voters Aid to Anderson," *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 4, 1960; *State of Kansas, Election Statistics, 1960, Primary and General Elections*, 24.

**VOTE FOR
BOYD
FOR
UNITY
AND
TEAMWORK**

McDill "Huck"

BOYD



**THE
MAN
WHO
CAN
WIN**

- A man with demonstrated ability to work with others to make Kansas a better place in which to establish a business; to work; to live; and raise a family.
- A native Kansan committed to a program of economy, based upon mature experience.

"B" for BOYD — VOTE for BOYD
The Man Who Can Win in November

Boyd-for-Governor Committee
John Brookens, Chairman
Topeka, Kansas

Anderson ran against McDill "Huck" Boyd (whose campaign pamphlet is pictured here) in the 1960 Republican gubernatorial primary, which was "tough" in Anderson's estimation. In January 1960 Anderson committed to visit "every county in the state of Kansas before the primary election in August," and he did so, campaigning in each of Kansas's 105 counties.

I had friends in every county in the state and I had friends in the party. I don't like to state anything in a bragging sense at all about why I won. I won because I got the most votes. I think I got the most votes because I had a background. I had a background of three statewide elections as attorney general [the primary in 1956, and the general elections of 1956 and 1958] and I had a background as attorney general of law enforcement for the benefit of the people of the state.

During the 1960 gubernatorial election every crowd I talked to wanted to hear about the death penalty, and they would clap when I would tell them what I thought it ought to be. I told them, "I believe in enforcing the law and I tried a man when I was county attorney and he got the death penalty and we hung him, hung him with a rope." Every speech I made I worked in at least a little part of it that George Docking was not the type of governor we wanted for another term in his handling of his authority as the governor of the state dealing with the death penalty and commutation of sentences. George Docking commuted the sentence of a person that had been tried and convicted in Wyandotte County, Kansas, way back prior to 1960 and had been ordered to be executed. By the time this case got to Governor George Docking the guy asked for commutation of the sentence and to break it down from death penalty to life imprisonment, which Docking did. Docking said "I am conscientiously,"—that's the word he used—he says, "I'm conscientiously opposed to the death penalty." The governor shouldn't substitute his conscientious objection for the rule of law and the finding of a jury of twelve of his peers. So I criticized him for that. I said we don't need a governor who is going to think he is bigger than the jury system that we have in the law.¹⁸



Anderson remembered that during his 1960 gubernatorial campaign against the Democratic incumbent George Docking (pictured here), "every crowd I talked to wanted to hear about the death penalty, and they would clap when I would tell them what I thought it ought to be. . . . Every speech I made I worked in at least a little part of it that George Docking was not the type of governor we wanted for another term . . . [because of his way of] dealing with the death penalty and commutation of sentences."

The death penalty was not the main reason I won governor—I was pretty well known for my other work—but it played a part. Governor George Docking just did not believe in the death penalty. During the campaign I just hounded him and hounded him for that. When I'd tell people about Docking and his stand on the death penalty they were all on my side. Every speech I'd make I'd mention it and get a good reaction. So Docking had what I thought were real problems in the area of pardons and the paroling of prisoners. I didn't think he had the experience to deal with those kinds of issues. He also had some problems in working with the legislature and getting along with them.

18. During the campaign newspaper reports displayed Anderson's steady drumbeat of criticism against Docking on the subject of pardons and paroles, causing Docking to be on the defensive. On November 1, 1960, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reported that the governor insisted he had used the power of commutation only once, and Docking asked the attorney general if, in this particular capital case, "this does not fall within his definition of his miscarriage of justice." Anderson responded, "For four years that he [Docking] has been governor, he has done nothing in this field except render a miserable administration, and now asks for a third term to complete work which he has not yet started." "Anderson Sees 'Desperation' of Governor," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 4, 1960; "No Corruption, Says Governor," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 1, 1960.

I thought I could do a better job. But I liked old George Docking. I never had any trouble with him myself. But I thought he issued too many pardons. I think the voters did too.¹⁹

The day after the election I had a unique experience with Governor Docking. We actually had offices right across the hall from each other in the capitol building. In those days the back door to the attorney general's office was right across the hall from the governor's office door. And there was an elevator near there as well. Well, the morning after the election in which I had defeated Docking, I was on the first floor and I went to the elevator and walked in and who should be standing in there by himself but old George Docking! So it was just me and him in the elevator as it went up to the second floor. So I said, "Hello Governor, how are you?" I swear to God his face turned a bright red. He looked at me and didn't say a word. We went up together and then got off. Later that day I saw him and he said hello and was very pleasant. It just took him a while to get over the defeat. He just wasn't ready to talk to me earlier in the morning after losing the election, which I perfectly understand. I don't blame him. It must have been very disappointing.²⁰

BEING GOVERNOR

I enjoyed being governor of Kansas and being re-elected and being accepted by the people for a second term. That says in effect you did all right the first term so

19. The 1960 gubernatorial campaign and election were contextualized by the quadruple murders of the Herbert W. Clutter family—later immortalized in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*—that occurred at Holcomb, Kansas, on November 14, 1959. A banner headline in the *Topeka State Journal*, January 1, 1960, read "Two Quizzed in Clutter Murders," and the accompanying page-one story featured the mug shots of the prime suspects, who had been arrested in Las Vegas, Nevada, two days before. Embedded firmly within Anderson's criticism of Docking's stance on the death penalty was the implication that he would commute the sentences of the convicted killers, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock. (Their trial, conviction, and sentencing to death by hanging occurred at the Finney County courthouse in Garden City, March 22–29, 1960.) In his post-election analysis, *Capital* columnist Jim Petterson wrote that voters interpreted Docking's commutation of an earlier murder conviction to life in prison "as prospective freedom from the hangman's noose for the murderers of the Clutter family near Garden City." See "Kansas Returns to First Love—GOP," *Topeka Daily Capital*, November 9, 1960; "Ex-Convicts Are Arrested in Las Vegas," *Topeka State Journal*, January 1, 1960.

20. Anderson defeated Docking by a substantial margin on Election Day, November 8, 1960, in large part because the previously fracture GOP united behind its state ticket. The incumbent Democratic governor tallied only 43.6 percent of the popular votes (402,261) in his bid for an unprecedented third term and was bested by Anderson who polled 511,534 or 55.4 percent. "Republicans Win Clean Sweep in Kansas Races," *Topeka State Journal*, November 9, 1960; "A Kansas Tidal Wave," *Topeka State Journal*, November 10, 1960; Lujan, *Kansas Votes*, 26.

you get another one, and I enjoyed that. I enjoyed the work but not as a matter of enjoyment of any exercise of power in a public office. There is some power that goes with being a governor, of course. But I didn't enjoy it in the sense of just exercising power over someone and saying you've got to do this because I say so—never. That never entered my mind. I enjoyed working with the legislature when they came into session every session. I've read and known of governors having a hard time getting their legislation through, getting bills through that they support and then can't get them through the house or the senate or both. I never faced that kind of a problem with any degree of it being a great problem.

If I look back on it and try to look at the problems and look at myself, I was the holder of the office that those problems came to and I had to get them done. I just tried to take the problems as they were brought to us and tried to find solutions for them and work with the legislature to do it. The legislature has the power. You know, the governor can propose and suggest but the legislature enacts and carries out the work. And I worked with the legislature. We had a Republican majority all four years I was in office, in the House and the Senate, but we had active Democrats that knew what they wanted on many things and played a role. When you get a problem that might seem to be political, many times [it] is not as much political as just a genuine problem of something needing to be done and needing the money to do it. That's not Republican or Democrat, that's just a problem for the people. And we had a number of those. Change should be in the interests of the general public, not just a few interested in one or two issues. Do things for the benefit of the people, not to harm them.

In four sessions of the legislature I worked with them with what you call a liaison agent between the governor's office and the legislature. Other governors have done it the same way. I had one of the best of those types of officers that anyone could ever have in a man named Robert Anderson from Ottawa. He's deceased now. He had served in the house as speaker of the house and I asked him to come up to Topeka and work in between the legislature and the committees of the House and the Senate.

When we would have a problem of thinking about getting a bill through the legislature or whether it needed amendments of a type that would get it through, I held meetings in the governor's office. We had however many meetings we needed to get the job done. We brought in the chairmen of the committees of both the House and the Senate, other members of the committees, any legislator that



In his four sessions with the legislature, Anderson worked with Democrats through "what you call a liaison agent between the governor's office and the legislature. . . . I had one of the best of those types of officers that anyone could ever have in a man named Robert Anderson from Ottawa," who served in the legislature from 1953 until 1961 and who is pictured here.

introduced a bill that was going through both the Senate and the House. I would bring all of those people in to lunch at the governor's office and order up trays of sandwiches and drinks and cookies and whatever goes for a lunch like that. I would do that in the governor's office and we would talk about the problem and how to solve it. We had both Democrats and Republicans there, you understand. We'd meet with them and if they had a problem I would talk about it. I'd say, "What are we going to do to make this change that will get us the legislation we need and still get it through?" And that was one of the most successful

things I did, to work with the House and the Senate, and I did that all four years I was there. And you've got the Democrat members, we didn't keep any secrets from them, we made them part of the system of resolving the problem. I found it to be practically more workable to get those differences aired out and to try to resolve them in a group, by way of talking about it rather than to fight about it on the floor of the House or the Senate. If you had it worked out between both parties or the leaders of them, why then, they didn't go back on their word once we got a resolution to it. And if you get a bill killed out there sometimes it's hard to revive them. See, we tried to avoid that. I think that's one of the best methods that I worked with. Other governors have done the same thing but I just doubt that any of them used the meetings as much as I did. And I know we got the problems worked out.²¹

A governor does many things while in office. They make many appointments. They appoint judges. I think that our judicial system has to be maintained as a good judiciary that sees that the laws are enforced and makes decisions and resolves disputes between people. Judges have to try to do that and we need good judges and we need a governor to give us good judges. So it's an important responsibility of the governor to appoint good judges. Now, being a lawyer for fifty-nine years, I have dealt with many, many, many, many judges. And I've dealt with many, many more lawyers. I will say this: Notwithstanding that some might think I'm being critical, but as much as a governor deals with making laws, enforcing and executing—that's the job of the governor to execute and see that the laws are fulfilled and carried out, and to appoint these judges—I like to see good lawyers become governor. Now

21. Anderson is, if anything, being rather humble in his description of how well he was able to work with the legislature and his innovative methods of getting his programs through. Near the end of the 1961 legislative session, Ray Morgan of the *Kansas City Star* wrote that Anderson had "got things done largely by persuasion," and that his effectiveness in dealing with the legislature "is shown by the fact that most of his program had been enacted." This program included: increased aid to schools, a new building program for colleges, increased aid to mental health clinics, state parole board reform, and school consolidation. Speaker of the House William L. Mitchell, a fourth-term Republican from Hutchinson, said, "I don't think the governor could have played it any better as far as the Legislature is concerned. . . . It was like a house of cards. One wrong move and the whole thing could have fallen down on him." Morgan also wrote that Anderson would not hesitate to visit legislators' offices—and even the House floor on one famous occasion—to negotiate compromises and secure votes. See "Anderson Woos and Wins Legislators," *Kansas City Star*, July 19, 1961; *1961 Kansas Legislative Directory* (Topeka: Midwest Industry Magazine, 1961), 69, 121; for a sketch of Robert A. Anderson of Ottawa, see *1957 Kansas Legislative Directory* (Topeka: Midwest Industry Magazine, 1957), 83.

I understand that doesn't always happen and I'm not critical of the way things have come out and I know we're not going to [always] do that. If we were to submit a question, yes or no, to all the voters of the state of Kansas, "Should we have all lawyers for governor?" I don't have any doubt about what the answer would be. They would say no. We don't want all lawyers. But what a governor needs is a basic knowledge and experience of dealing with the day-to-day problems in our society and the only way we're going to improve on these problems that we have is with good laws and good execution of them.

I remember the NAACP [representatives from the Kansas National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] coming to see me when I was governor. They wanted to have a meeting on the east steps of the statehouse. I said of course they could and I spoke to the group. Of course! Racism is a terrible thing. Every person as a citizen of the United States should have equal opportunity to succeed based on their abilities, to push themselves forward. If a black man succeeds, even if he overcomes whites, then he should have the opportunity to do so based on his abilities and efforts. That's what I call equal rights.

I also enjoyed the travel that went with being governor. I went to governors' conference meetings and met many people that way. I had lunch with Jack Kennedy, President John [F.] Kennedy, in the White House. He did a nice thing. He invited every one of the fifty governors—not more than two or four at a time so he had just a very few people and a close-type luncheon—to the White House for lunch over a period of weeks. That was a nice thing. He was executed in that assassination in Texas [November 22, 1963] not too long after I had lunch with him.

EDUCATION GOVERNOR

I've been told, and it was said, that I was an "Education Governor" after the first two or three years that I was in office. There had been a little bit of money collected from sales tax and the property tax collections that the state distributed back to schools, but nothing like enough to give good support to the schools so that they didn't have to levy such a high tax against the homeowners, because that's the basis for the support of schools, traditionally. In 1961 I addressed the legislature in a joint session of the House and the Senate and I recommended that we give substantially higher state aid to elementary and high schools in the state and that to do it in a manner that the state Education Department had recommended. They recommended that we get rid of—by consolidation of schools—all of these little

schools throughout the state. I think we had well over a thousand school districts—little schools where the whole district would only have ten students in it. So by consolidation we brought them in. Now we've got 303 districts for schools from grades one through twelve for the entire state of Kansas. Three hundred and three. We had well over a thousand in 1961! With the small schools they were unable really to properly utilize state aid in a manner that would make it an equal type of distribution for the districts. So I recommended consolidation and got the schools started on it and it's been improving every year since in the way of consolidation.²²

I recommended the first support by the state in 1961, the first year I was governor, to support the municipal universities. Washburn was one of them and Wichita was one of them. Those schools were giving higher education and support to the municipalities and I recommended state aid for them. I later recommended that they bring Wichita University into the state system. Wichita was the biggest city in Kansas then, by quite a few people, and they were maintaining that university at Wichita, and from the standpoint of budget and money expenditures they were going broke every year, truly. I considered that a problem for the students that wanted to go to college and lived in Wichita or around Wichita, such as in Arkansas City to the south, or Kingman to the west, or in Newton and McPherson. They were all closer to Wichita than they were to KU or Kansas State. And if they could live at home they could go to college. If they couldn't live at home and go to college then many of them dropped out. That's the problem we tried to solve and we did it by bringing it in the state system and for the students then at Wichita they got a much, much cheaper way of going to college than they otherwise would have. There is no other way to put it.

The legislature also brought state aid for the junior colleges throughout the state and of course all of the state schools like Kansas State and KU and Hays, they were all aboard as state supported. And we had a scramble on that. But we got it done. We helped the Johnson County Junior College. That school is just a wonderful junior college. Twenty-five thousand students go there now—twenty-five

22. Since the state Supreme Court overturned a portion of the law passed during Anderson's first term, it remained an issue through the passage of a second bill by the 1963 legislature. The Anderson papers are rich in material on this controversial topic, which clearly divided the state along "urban" and "rural" lines. See especially, "Education-Unification of School Districts, 1961-1963," folder 4, Box 28-01-04-05, and "Education-Unification of School Districts, 1963," folder 5, Anderson papers, KSHS.

thousand! Now, if they don't have a good school like that to go to then many of them won't get a higher education. I proposed that we give state aid to all junior colleges in the state of Kansas back in 1961. That was the first state aid that went to junior colleges. And I don't think it was with a great amount of additional tax. You see, they were paid out of the state funds for the state aid. And it wasn't all that great an amount, but every nickel of it helped them.

LEAVING OFFICE

When I left office I didn't leave [the incoming governor] Bill Avery a deficit. The cost of government was increasing every year, so he had to have a higher budget than I did. The last budget that I had in my last year as governor was a little less than half a billion dollars, just about \$500 million was the total budget. Now what is it, five billion?

You know, it's interesting talking about individuals and the political thinking then. When I was in office in 1964 and then in the election in 1964, we had candidates in the primary election for governor. I don't know that I can even name all of them. Avery was a congressman [representing Kansas's Second District in the U.S. Congress] and came back and ran for governor and he ultimately won.²³ But [state senator] Paul Wunsch had been wanting to run for governor for twenty years and had talked about it. He would get right up to the starting gate, you know, and not run—until 1964. Paul decided to run that year.

Paul Wunsch was good. I had a high regard for his ability. He came in to see me during the last legislative session and the submission of the budget and the address to the legislature. He says, "John, if we can arrange for it and get a bill in the legislature I want to know whether or not you will give approval or disapproval. If you disapprove it I don't think we will do it. But if you don't mind, I'm planning for running for governor. If I am elected I would rather not have a great big increase in the budget in my first year or second year as governor." We had two-year terms then. He said, "If we can increase these taxes a little bit and build up a reserve I would like to do that." Well, I said,

23. William H. Avery, a Wakefield, Clay County, Republican, served in the U.S. House of Representatives (1955–1965) for almost a decade before running for governor in 1964. Born on August 11, 1911, Bill Avery graduated from the University of Kansas at Lawrence in 1934 and engaged in business as a farmer and stockman near Wakefield; he served two terms in the Kansas state house of representatives (1951–1955) and was first elected to the U.S. Congress in 1954. See, William Henry Avery Collection, Kansas State Historical Society, www.ksks.org/research/collections/documents/personalpapers/findingaids/avery_william_henry.htm, for online finding aids and biographical information.

"We can't do it, Paul. I'm sorry." Well, Paul didn't have to worry about it because he didn't get elected. But I didn't leave a deficit either. Those deficits grow by an increase in the cost of government and you know how they've grown. They've grown tremendously in the state because of inflation, for one thing. That's the way it works.²⁴

REPUBLICAN PARTY POLITICS

In 1964 I was governor and ordinarily, regardless of whether it is the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, the governor would be chairman of the delegation that would go to the national party convention. Barry Goldwater was the candidate in 1964. But during the work-up period before the national convention [New York governor] Nelson Rockefeller tried to get the nomination. I supported Nelson Rockefeller. I knew Nelson Rockefeller quite well as a governor. In early 1964 I went to Florida for a meeting with him to try to help him with strategy on winning the nomination. He was a good man and a smart man. I thought he was a better candidate and I thought he would have made a better president. I thought he would carry nationwide as a stronger candidate than Goldwater. And Goldwater did get beat in the [general] election. He didn't even carry Kansas.²⁵ I told these guys it would happen. They were a bunch of the Republican committeemen but they were bound for Goldwater. And so they wouldn't even give me a place on the committee that went to San Francisco for the national convention! I mean, I went out there, but I wasn't a voter. Now you say things I regret, I

24. Paul R. Wunsch of Kingman, Kingman County, Kansas, was a real force in Kansas politics and government throughout the mid-twentieth century, despite the fact that his ambitions for the governorship went unfulfilled. He was first elected to the Kansas legislature in 1936 and served continuously, first in the house and then the senate, until 1964 when he sought the Republican gubernatorial nomination. In a crowded field, Wunsch came in third out of eight candidates; he received over 71,000 votes, but William H. Avery and McDill "Huck" Boyd received 86,000 and 75,000 respectively. Secretary of State, *State of Kansas, Election Statistics, 1964, Primary and General Elections* (Topeka: State Printing Plant, 1965), 17–20; 1963 *Kansas Legislative Directory, 1963* (Topeka: Midwest Industry Magazine, 1963), 50; for some analysis of Wunsch's leadership ability, including the text of an interview with the former legislator, see Marvin Harder and Carolyn Rampey, *The Kansas Legislature: Procedures, Personalities, and Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1972), 117–29.

25. Against the incumbent, President Lyndon B. Johnson, the conservative Arizona senator carried just six southern states and captured only fifty-two electoral votes to Johnson's 486; the popular vote was 43,130,000 to 27,178,000. For one of the few times in the state's history, Kansans voted Democrat in the presidential contest. Johnson carried the Sunflower State by 77,000 votes. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 2, Bicentennial Edition* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975), 1073–77; Lujan, *Kansas Votes*, 5–6.



Anderson recalled that Paul Wunsch, who served in the legislature from 1937 until 1964 and who is pictured above, "was good, I had a high regard for his ability." Wunsch shared Anderson's commitment to improving education in Kansas; in 1963 he worked with the president of Wichita University to bring the school into the state system.

regret that they didn't let me be a member. But I don't regret what I did [supporting Rockefeller], not at all.

I considered running [for governor] again, but I had criticized George Docking rather liberally for running for a third term and I thought that would be a bit of a leap to change just when I wanted to run instead of him running for the third term, so I let it go. I could have run for Congress any one of two or three different times but I didn't want to do it, obviously. I could have been a United States senator by just signing my name. When [Senator Andrew] Schoeppel died in 1963 [sic] I was governor and I appointed [James B.] Pearson. I could have had that appointment. Harold Chase was lieutenant governor and he wanted me to do that. You know, personal matters and personal problems are always present no matter what the

political problems or political factors are. At the time that Schoeppel died I had three children in grade school and high school at Topeka. If I left the office in Topeka what would we do? I didn't want to take the family and those three children at their ages and put them in schools in Washington, D.C., or Virginia. They may have some very nice schools, but I had been there to Washington enough to have the idea—right or wrong—that I didn't want to take the family there. And I sure didn't want to leave the family here and me go to Washington and come back and forth. So I didn't appoint myself or have myself appointed, as many people have done to get in the Senate. It was pure family consideration. And I have never regretted it one minute, because the youngsters all came through here and went through school here in Olathe and went on to college. All three of them went to college at KU and graduated and have all done so well. I think I made the wise choice and I've lived with it.²⁶

I would have liked to have been a federal judge, though. Pearson was a Kansas senator when a federal judgeship opened up and I hoped he would recommend me for appointment. Through my career he'd been helpful as my campaign manager, and he was my friend. And I appointed him to the open U.S. Senate seat when it came up when I was governor. But he turned out to be less of a friend than I thought he was. Once he went to Washington, D.C., and the Senate I would never hear from him much. I had that ambition to be a judge in federal court, and I must say I thought he would help me get the judgeship. I didn't

26. Anderson could have resigned and had Lt. Governor/Governor Chase appoint him to the vacant U.S. Senate seat. But after the Fred Hall "triple-play" debacle, that sort of gambit might have been politically dangerous. However, Anderson also could have appointed a "placeholder" in the Senate—an ally who would agree not to run for the open seat in 1962—with the idea that Anderson would run for the seat instead of the appointee. There was precedent for this in Kansas. In 1949 Senator Clyde Reed died and Governor Frank Carlson appointed his friend, Harry Darby to the seat. Darby did not stand for election in 1950 but Carlson did, and after he won he ended up serving eighteen years in the Senate. Anderson and Pearson had been close political allies and personal friends, but the new senator eagerly sought and won election to the unexpired seat himself in November 1962. Pearson managed Anderson's first campaign for governor beginning in June 1960—after Anderson's primary victory, the *Kansas City Times* (August 4, 1960) referred to the team as the "Gold Dust Twins of Kansas Politics." See Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors, 190–93*, 186–89; "Schoeppel's Illness Clouds '62 Plains," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, December 31, 1961; "Topeka Kickoff is Made by Anderson," *Kansas City Times*, June 2, 1960; "G.O.P. Spotlight on Senate and House Races," *Independence Reporter*, February 12, 1962, in "Republican Party, Clippings," vol. 16, 1959–1963, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; "Looking Behind the Political Scene. Governor John Anderson, Up for Reelection, Retains Enthusiasm for Farming," *Wichita Eagle and Beacon*, September 23, 1962, in "Governors of Kansas Clippings," vol. 4, 1958–1965, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.



James B. Pearson, pictured here, was helpful to Anderson throughout his political career, serving alongside him in the state senate and later as his gubernatorial campaign manager. As governor Anderson appointed Pearson to fill U.S. Senator Andrew F. Schoeppel's vacant seat, he had hoped that Pearson could help him become a federal judge. Once Pearson got to Washington, Anderson recalled, "I never heard from him and he didn't end up recommending me. I was very disappointed by that."

think there was anything wrong with that, all I wanted was to serve the public. But, dammit, he got out to D.C. and forgot about where he had received his help along the way and who his friends were. I never heard from him and he didn't end up recommending me. I was very disappointed by that.

It's HISTORY

I enjoyed my years of public service and my four years as governor. It's far behind me now, but all along the way it's history, and I was part of it for a short while. I might have done a few things differently now from then. After the fact you may see what it amounts to but after you do things you can't back up on them all. There were a few things but they didn't turn into big problems, put it that way. I didn't have much of a fuss. And to this day I can still remember looking out the window of the governor's mansion at Cedar Crest—we were the first family to live there—and seeing our Shetland ponies out on the lawn

Recollections of Charles McAtee

Charles McAtee, one of Governor John Anderson's close aides, was interviewed as part of The Kansas Governor documentary project. The following excerpt from this September 10, 2004, interview offers additional insight into the surprising snub of Anderson by Senator James B. Pearson, who owed his seat in the U.S. Senate to the governor. Actually, McAtee's story hints at the integrity of both Anderson and Pearson. Anderson would not attach conditions upon Pearson's appointment, but Pearson feared that the reforms he and Anderson had championed when in the Kansas legislature—reforms that involved an attack on political "back room deals" involving judicial appointments—would be undermined if his appointment to the Senate smacked of any sort of "bargain."

I became very fond of Governor Anderson and very close to his family. I saw his kids grow up. During Governor Anderson's tenure [U.S. Senator] Andy Schoeppel died. Everybody assumed that Governor Anderson would resign and that Harold Chase, the lieutenant governor from Salina, would become the governor and then appoint him to fill the unexpired term of Andy Schoeppel. But frankly, his children were young and he had no real desire to go to Washington or to be a United States senator. But he did aspire to be a federal judge. He had been in the state senate and his seatmate from Johnson County was Jim Pearson, they were both state senators. They were very close. He appointed Jim Pearson to the U.S. Senate to fill the unexpired term of Senator Schoeppel.

It was not long after he had appointed Jim Pearson that Governor Anderson called me in and dispatched me to Washington, D.C., in an attempt to convince Senator Pearson to help him become a federal judge. And at that time General [Charles] Decker, a native of Kansas, was the head of the Judge Advocate General's Office for the Army. The governor wanted me to go see General Decker because he had worked very closely with Bobby Kennedy and he thought General Decker could be of some assistance with the attorney general of the United States, Bobby Kennedy, to get him a federal judgeship. Then he wanted me to take the message from General

Decker to Senator Pearson and tell Senator Pearson that he really hoped to have Senator Pearson's support to be a federal judge.

I went to see General Decker in the Pentagon. I met with him and he was very cordial, very receptive. I extended the governor's greetings and told him what the governor wanted. And he told me that, to the best of his ability and without getting too political, that he'd be glad to recommend to the attorney general, Bobby Kennedy, that John Anderson was a very good man and a good lawyer and he'd put in a good word for him.

Then I went from the Pentagon over to the capitol building and met with Senator Pearson and [aide] John Conard. His office was just getting organized and I remember that Senator Pearson was sitting on the edge of the bathtub in his private bathroom. I told him the governor had asked me to come back and solicit his support for a federal judgeship. And I'll never forget Senator Pearson saying, "Chuck, you can tell the governor that I cannot do that." And I don't know what the background was and what they'd done within the party, but he said, "If he becomes a federal judge then I can see that everything we worked for in the Republican Party of Kansas just going right down the drain." With that he leaned over and took his finger and made a circle down the drain in the bathtub and said, "Just tell the governor he's going to have to plough his own furrow."

You know, I'm just a farm kid from Kansas, but I'll never forget flying back here on that airplane thinking, "If I were the governor and I wanted a federal judgeship, and I was going to appoint someone to the United States Senate who would have some influence in that respect, wouldn't one think that he would actually extract some kind of commitment in that regard in advance?" I was just surprised, but that's not the kind of guy that Governor Anderson was. He just sort of relied upon his friends to do the right thing. And then I thought, "How am I going to report this to the Governor!" He just appointed this man to the United States Senate and the thanks he gets is that he's going to have to plough his own furrow!



Charles D. McAtee held several important positions in the Anderson administration, including executive secretary. In August 1964 he ran unsuccessfully as a candidate for the Second District congressional seat in the Republican Party primary. During William Avery's administration McAtee was director of Kansas's Penal Institutions.

So, I came back and I came in and I reported about my very cordial visit with General Decker. Then I took a deep breath and reported to him the remarks of Senator Pearson. I remember the governor looked at me and said, "Well I'll be damned." End of story. He didn't extract a political promise in advance. And I respect him for it, but I'm still surprised by it.

munching on the grass. Can you imagine, ponies wandering around the governor's house?²⁷ It was a unique time and a great experience, and I hope some of the things I did people will remember.

After leaving the governor's office in 1965, Anderson returned to his law practice and family farm in Olathe. He was

²⁷ Arlene Anderson, in *Kansas First Families At Home*, said, "We had people lined up along the fences and children from neighboring houses who would come to feed the ponies."



Anderson's years as governor fell at the memorable moment when Kansas celebrated its statehood centennial. In this photo from February 22, 1961, in Philadelphia, the governor and Rolla Clymer of El Dorado (dressed as Abraham Lincoln), reenact the raising of the thirty-four star U.S. flag, like President Elect Lincoln had done 100 years before.

appointed attorney for both the Kansas Turnpike Authority and the State Board of Healing Arts and also served from 1965 until 1972 as the Executive Director of the Citizens' Conference on State Legislatures. Several times he was suggested for a federal judgeship, but as Anderson alludes to above, he was never formally nominated. In 1972 Anderson again ran for governor, hoping to win the GOP nomination in order to face another Docking, George Docking's son Governor Robert Docking (1967–1975). However, Anderson lost in the primary to Morris Kay, who lost to Docking (37 to 62 percent) in the general election.²⁸ When asked why he ran again in 1972, Anderson said, "I enjoyed the four years I did have up there enough that I made another try. That was my first loss of any race I ever ran. It didn't break my heart completely." That would be Anderson's last foray into electoral politics.

Anderson, who turns ninety-one next spring, is recently retired and living in Overland Park, Kansas. He was featured

28. Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors*, 215–18; Joel Paddock, "Democratic Politics in a Republican State: The Gubernatorial Campaigns of Robert Docking, 1966–1972," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 17 (Summer 1994): 108–23; Secretary of State, *State of Kansas, Election Statistics, 1971 Special Election, 1972 Primary and Special Elections, 1972 General Election* (Topeka: State Printing Plant, 1973), 20–21, 88–89.

prominently in the 2005 documentary, *The Kansas Governor*, which aired on Kansas and Missouri statewide public television. When asked what he hoped Kansans would remember him for, Anderson laughed and said, "Just don't get mad at me." More seriously, the former governor said that he hoped people would remember that he did not get into public service for the money, any personal gain, or for some ideological reason, but because he thought he could get some things done and improve the state. He said he was proud of "some of the things we did," and was also proud of the words he spoke in his 1961 inaugural address, "because I believe 'em," he said. At the end of the December 2006 interview for this project, Anderson was asked to read aloud from a section of this address, which he did, saying, "The poor, the rich, the humble, the proud, the strong, the weak, the fortunate and the unfortunate must be the beneficiaries in the years to come of a government progressively administered in the interests of all the people."²⁹ [KH]

29. "Inaugral Address of Governor John Anderson," 5.