

By David M. Weisheit/The Orange County Register

On the road in California, 1987

Everything Mark Murray needed to know about the oil business, he could have learned from the state Legislature.

He just didn't have time for it.

If he had, he might not have spent the next 13 years battling other oil companies for access to state oil fields. Murray was busy trying to persuade city councils to place oil wells on their properties.

The battle was won by Murray and the California Oil Institute, a group sponsored by oil companies to fight back the Legislature.

The Legislature had been trying to help a group of investors, including two former state Senate colleagues, get a foothold in the industry. They had convinced the Legislature to pass a law that would allow them to drill for oil on public land.

Murray and his associates said the Legislature was trying to give away too many of the state's resources.

It was a win-lose situation for the industry, said Bill Shriver, a member of the Legislature who opposed the bill.

The Legislature passed the bill, but the competition for access to the oil fields increased. Murray said he was able to stop the bill from becoming law.

He was right. The Legislature approved the bill, but it was vetoed by the governor. The battle was over.

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How We Did This Story

The research for this story was done by Mark Murray, a former state senator who represented the district.

The story was written by David M. Weisheit, a reporter for the Orange County Register.

The story was edited by John S. Carroll, the managing editor of the Register.

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A HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA LOBBYING: 1910-1916

In 1910, the state of California was facing a fiscal crisis. The state was in debt and the legislature was looking for ways to increase revenue. One of the solutions proposed was to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages in the state.

The liquor industry was eager to support the proposal and hired lobbyists to advocate for it. The lobbyists were successful, and the legislature passed a law allowing the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The liquor industry was not the only group that benefited from the new law. The state gained revenue from the sale of liquor, and the industry was able to expand its business.

The success of the law led to more lobbying by the industry. In 1916, the legislature passed a law that allowed the sale of alcoholic beverages in the state.

This law was eventually overturned by a constitutional amendment in 1934, but the lobby remained active and continued to influence state policy.
By Daniel M. Weinstein/The Orange County Register

Sacramento, August 9/98

Mack Murray is pedking his buds in front of a room filled with 120 or so lawyers. He tried not to look up at Sen. John Burton's face during the morning session of the Capitol media briefing. Murray was just another of the many lobbyists who were sure to be looking for votes of their clients. He was not about to let his clients down.

One thing Murray had learned in nearly 20 years as a lobbyist is that when Sen. John Burton gets angry you should stay quiet and not say anything. Murray has been lobbying since 1969 and has worked for clients like the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Public Employees' Retirement System, and the California Nurses Association.

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WHOM'S WHO

> Senate Leader John Burton: A San Francisco Democrat, Burton was the legislature's majority leader in 1988 and 1990. He is a former member of the California bar and has been involved in several key roles in the state legislature. Burton is known for his strong leadership skills and has been a powerful advocate for the working class.

> House Speaker Willie Brown: A San Francisco Democrat, Brown has served as California's Assembly Speaker since 1987. He is known for his ability to navigate complex political landscapes and has been a key figure in California's political landscape for several decades.

> Governor Pete Wilson: A former Los Angeles County District Attorney, Wilson is a Republican and has been serving as California's governor since 1995. He is known for his conservative policies and has been a vocal opponent of government spending.

> Attorney General Dan Lungren: A former state assemblyman, Lungren is a Republican and has been serving as California's attorney general since 1995. He is known for his tough stance on criminal justice issues.

> Jerry Brown: A former California governor, Brown is a Democrat and has been serving as California's attorney general since 1975. He is known for his liberal policies and has been a vocal advocate for the environment.

> Los Angeles Times: A California-based newspaper, the Los Angeles Times has been a key player in California's political landscape for several decades. It is known for its powerful investigative reporting and has been a vocal critic of the state's political leaders.

> The Orange County Register: An Orange County-based newspaper, The Orange County Register has been a key player in California's political landscape for several decades. It is known for its powerful investigative reporting and has been a vocal critic of the state's political leaders.

> San Francisco Chronicle: A San Francisco-based newspaper, the San Francisco Chronicle has been a key player in California's political landscape for several decades. It is known for its powerful investigative reporting and has been a vocal critic of the state's political leaders.

> Los Angeles Daily News: A Los Angeles-based newspaper, the Los Angeles Daily News has been a key player in California's political landscape for several decades. It is known for its powerful investigative reporting and has been a vocal critic of the state's political leaders.

> San Diego Union Tribune: A San Diego-based newspaper, the San Diego Union Tribune has been a key player in California's political landscape for several decades. It is known for its powerful investigative reporting and has been a vocal critic of the state's political leaders.
Murray walked on the bill for several days, sitting at his computer in a cluttered state office behind his desk in the Capitol, and a black board, Sacramento City Hall, to the door around his desk the senator needed training on various drafts of bills, newspaper clippings and other papers he had been saving for years. He cranked up his online radio station and worked late into the night, finding a way for old friends to let him know their thoughts on a particular bill. If someone mentioned it to him, he’d feel. Opponents from the Senate majority were getting his number. Murray, a new governor – Democrat Gray Davis – was taking his office, and the Legislature would have more numbers sympathetic to the environment had just been named as speaker.

At Grip Uppin’s, an aide to Sen. Byron Sher, Murray was on the phone.

Lipper told Murray that Sher wanted to carry the bill in the Legislature. The Senate leader, he said, would like his help, and Lipper mentioned Murray as a

‘Sheep with 4%’ Lipper said, referring to the everything bill. Sher, who voted for the measure a few months before leaving office, "told me in a whisper." Murray knew what Lipper meant – that she was feeding his power-hungry appetite. Murray told Lipper that he didn’t know what he was doing, and that if the Senate didn’t pass the bill, he also would include Murray’s proposal to double the deposit – a bill on the increasingly popular 30-cent plastic bags of all.

This was the dream assignment. It was a gift, Murray knew. He could follow his expertise on the issue, but Murray was to the world of lobbying. He offered a small amount of money, he said, "I made it a correction, but it had been a deposit." Murray said.

The next day, Murray walked to a meeting with a legislative leader, but he had not prepared a

“I don’t know what’s going to happen,” he said.

He wanted to be in touch. He wanted to be in the know.

He wanted to know.

He wanted to know what was happening.

He wanted to know what was going on.

He wanted to know what was going to happen.

On the Drive, the world seemed to be falling apart. He had not prepared to

He had not prepared for what was to come.

Murray had long advocated deposit tax on wine that more people would recycle the containers. He had acknowledged his bill after getting the

The one-year-old law that was supposed to go into effect in the spring, Murray said, would have been on the books, not, he said, "I don’t know what’s going to happen.”

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