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Interview with GARY GIACOMINI
by Marilyn L. Geary
October 27, 2011

INTERVIEWEE: Gary Giacomini (GG)
INTERVIEWERS: Marilyn L. Geary (MG), accompanied by Laurie Thompson (LT)
DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 27, 2011

MG It's Marilyn Geary. It's October 27th, 2011. I'm at the offices of Gary Giacomini at Hansen Bridgette LLP with Laurie Thompson on Wood Island at 80 East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Larkspur. Gary Giacomini has served 24 years on the board of supervisors in Marin County. He was 20 years on the Golden Gate Bridge District Board, 10 years on the California Coastal Commission Board, and served in many other positions of responsibility in Marin County. And has been called the "Mr. Environment for West Marin." So, we have a lot to talk about here, and I'd like to start with your early years. Where did you grow up, Mr. Giacomini?

GG: I was born and raised in Belvedere, and went to a one-room schoolhouse down there. Belvedere then was very different than it is now. Little tiny houses. My folks bought a house and a lot on Belvedere Lagoon for \$3,000.00. And I went to a one-room schoolhouse there where they had all the kids from kindergarten through the eighth grade in one room and the teacher would teach us by rows. My favorite memories were overhearing what the big kids were learning, like the eighth graders and stuff. So that – so I was lucky to – I mean, I'm a native guy. Not many people are lucky to do that, right? So that's my earliest years was a one-room schoolhouse in Belvedere. And I've spent most of my life down there, I spent sailing, racing boats out in the bay, and et cetera.

MG: What age did you start sailing?

GG: What?

MG: At what age did you start sailing?

GG: I started sailing at seven, actually, probably earlier than that, but what I did was I sailed a boat, a little boat called *El Toro* – it's eight feet long – and that's how I went to school. I sailed a boat across the Belvedere Lagoon over to the school. It was about a mile from my house. That's how I went back and forth from school.

MG: Were a lot of kids doing that at the time?

GG: Maybe three of us were, from over on this corner of Belvedere. Most of the kids lived on what we called the island, Belvedere Island, and they'd walk to school. The school building was what's now the Belvedere City Hall, but in those days it was up on the top of the hill. Years later, they rolled it down the bottom of the hill, and that's now the city hall. So no, there weren't many of us kids that lived on the lagoon, but there were three of us that I remember that did that sail. I'd take some of them. We'd trade boats and stuff.

MG: How many houses were there on the lagoon?

GG: Then?

MG: Yeah.

GG: There was 18 – 18 houses built in one little corner. They were Emporium pre-fab houses. You bought them and they assembled them. The Emporium in San Francisco.

MG: Are they still there?

GG: Yeah. They're there and they're worth a fortune, an absolute fortune, and they were little tiny things. Now, they've been added on to, et cetera. Then, of course, as the years went on, Belvedere got famous, but it was a long time coming. When I was in high school, I went to high school at Marin Catholic High School, and I was driving, and you drive down 101 – In my day, when I was driving, and there was a stop sign on 101, a stop sign. Can you imagine that? You wait a little bit and turn left and drive down the Belvedere peninsula. All there was, was dairy ranches down there. Just a whole line all the – it's now subdivisions on the way down – were dairy ranches.

And it was a big sort of railroad town. Tiburon was a – We used to go play on the train yards, and they would come, the trains would come there, and they'd go across the bay. There was a big train thing, place, in Tiburon. And so it was like a working class place. It's really hard to imagine now. And but as the years went on, what my folks did was put – The values would go up, you know, in their houses, and they'd go, "Whoa," and they'd sell that out, like the first I can't quite, can't remember what they sold it for, but they

thought it was a lot. They probably sold it for \$25,000 or \$30,000, and with that, built another one. And they did that five times.

MG: In Belvedere?

GG: In Belvedere. Always on the lagoon, as it developed. And but then it really blossomed and got very extremely wealthy, and my folks couldn't afford to stay there when I was in college. I went to Saint Mary's College over in Moraga. And I was heartbroken, but they sold the last Belvedere house in those days. Partly because – maybe because they were substantially putting me through college, right?

MG: So what were most of the kids' parents' jobs when you were going to elementary school there? What kind of work did the parents do of the kids in your school?

GG: I don't know. My father worked in the ship yards where Marin City is now. He built the liberty tankers that were all built there, for the war, in the war. And a lot of people were into that industry when I was really tiny.

MG: Your father was also a musician, correct?

GG: Yeah, he had a big swing band in the '40s and '50s, and he really actually had quite a band, because in the band, they weren't known at the time, but were Cal Jader, Dave Brubeck, Peggy Lee, in my father's orchestra, and they used to jam at our house in Belvedere when I was very, very young. They were not famous then. They lived in little cold water flats in San Francisco. We'd go over there, see these guys, then later they became world famous.

MG: How much of your father's music talents got transmitted to you?

GG: None. Zero. And he didn't want me to have any, because he – What happened was his father's dream, his own father's dream, my grandfather, was that my father would go to law school and be a lawyer. Now, my father was in college and he started to do these band things and he loved it, so he jumped school, and he went on the circuit, and had bands that played college band dances, etc. Anyway, he went off on that course, and he did not want me to do that. He didn't want me to be exposed to music because he thought I'd throw it all away. He wanted me to be – to grow up to be a lawyer. That's what he wanted, and he didn't want me to run off on the music side.

So the only way it had an impact on us is he would practice – He played a great baby grand piano and he'd play the most beautiful music. Always on Sunday morning, he would play music. He was practicing for his gigs. But he didn't want me to – He never wanted me to take music lessons or anything like that.

MG: And you didn't have any interest in it?

GG: No, I didn't, really, no. My whole deal was sailing. I just loved to sail. I was racing. I would sail night and day. We lived right on the water. I had free sailboats right there. I mean you walk out the back door and get in a sailboat and go. Those were great days. So that was my whole deal when I was in grammar school and most of high school.

MG: Did you race?

GG: I raced every single –

MG: And you're still?

GG: I did. I raced in the lagoon, I raced in the bay, I raced, I sailed – what you call, Mercurys and Clippers. These are sloops, swoopsters, a boat with two sails, a jib and a main sail. These were little boats – I mean 21 feet or so. Very wet boats. By that I mean they tip over in the bay. But that's what I did, growing up in grammar school and high school.

MG: Your father played at a lot of the well-known venues around Marin at the time, like the Meadow Club and so forth.

GG: The Rose Bowl. Fairfax Bowl.

MG: Marvel Mar.

GG: Bizarro's.

MG: Did you ever go to any of those places?

GG: Yeah, yeah, I went to all of them. I went to all of them to watch my father's big swing band, especially at the Larkspur Rose Bowl, 1,000 people dancing outside on big wooden floors, and same in Fairfax. Fairfax Town and Country Club.

MG: Were most of the people Marin-ites or were they coming from all over the –

GG: No, they came from all over the Bay Area. I mean there was – of course, there was some Marin-ites, but this was – They would follow this circuit. The weather was always like it is now – good in Marin County. So the folks from the peninsula and everything where it got more foggy would come out to Marin and come over here and spend a day at the beach or whatever and then spend the evening at some of these venues.

MG: So you were at Saint Mary's school, college.

GG: Yeah.

MG: And you became student body president.

GG: You done good research.

MG: At that point, were you thinking of becoming a lawyer?

GG: Always was. Yeah. Here, as a kid, I went to Marin Catholic High School, and then, as you say, Saint Mary's. My best friend in high school was a guy named Dave Freitas, who's still here. His family had all the Freitas ranches. And in those days, all those subdivisions, like Terra Linda, San Marin, and everything, were big Freitas ranches. They had so many ranches they lettered them – A, B, C, D, E – like that. None of the subdivisions were here. So I grew up with those kids, and was raised – then I shifted. My interest was on ranches. I mean worked on ranches a lot, had a lot of horses, I did, and it sort of changed my whole thing, and now I've forgotten the question you've asked. I've drifted off in some nether –

MG: I asked you what, when, where you thought you were going to be a lawyer when you were –

GG: So with those kids that I was close to, we ended up in some hunting clubs, deer camps, hunting clubs, and all the people, all the members were attorneys in San Rafael, attorneys and judges and all that, and I loved to hear their stories and all that. And I was then, I don't know, maybe I started living at that ranch when I was 14 or 15. And on summers, Dave Freitas and I would go there, and we would live there for three months, and we would ride horses, wear guns, rifles in the saddlebags, ride around, chase people off who were poaching, who were on the ranches hunting deer and didn't have the right to. We were deputized ranch people. Imagine that.

MG: You were deputized?

GG: Yeah, we were deputized by the county sheriff. And sometimes guys would draw down on you. They'd say to you, little punks, kids, 16, 17, and you'd catch some guy killing a big deer, and they knew that they were in trouble, and they'd look at us like a couple of punks, like, who are these guys? But we knew the territory really well and we would – when we would hear a shot or something, we'd ride these horses way around, and we knew where people had to park to get their cars to get on there, and we'd go first and get their license plates and all that, and then when we'd catch them, most of the time, they'd submit, but some of the times, they'd point at us and say, get out of here, we'll shoot you, shit like that, we'd say, well, that's fine, but we got your license, and then you're going to be in way bad trouble. So they all backed off in the end because of that.

MG: What ranch was this? What area was this?

GG: Well, what's now San Marin and Novato. That was called Freitas C Ranch, C like capital C. And we had then hunting rights on 20,000 acres. That's a lot of ranches. They would lease – We were on the Freitas C Ranch, but they would lease all these other ranches hunting rights for the summer. And so we had so much territory that we would only hunt some place once in a season. One canyon or one – you know. So we had,

really, a lot of country. Went from – in fact, the land went from Highway 101 in Novato out maybe 10 miles to the west. That’s hard to imagine now, because it’s all subdivisions, but there wasn’t nothing there. We’d ride at night in the week, much to Dave Freitas’s father’s dismay, we would, as kids, ride our horses into town and tie them up at Debora’s Bar in Novato, just ride the horses downtown, right?

Now, we weren’t any – we weren’t 18 – we weren’t – I mean we were – maybe my last year or two I might have been 17 or 18, but we were in no place to be able to buy a drink, but we did. These guys, these cowboy guys would go get drinks and we’d sit outside on the stoop and think we were big boys and girls.

MG: So the hunting clubs that you’re talking about – was there a name for it? And who were the members?

GG: They were all – the members were – it was on the Freitas ranch, and we just called it the Deer Camp. It’s now called Pierre Joske Park. The whole ranch is now in the Marin County Open Space District. That whole ranch, except for the San Marin subdivision down low, down near Novato. But that ranch went all the way up to the top. And that hunting camp was way up in the hills. And to this day, what the hunting camp was consisted of was a big – I’d say an acre or two fenced with barbed wire and maybe 24 beds, cots, outside, a couple little commons, but they were more to store things in. And wood stoves, whole line of wood stoves. And then a set of corrals, maybe six horses there, because we used horses to hunt, and then flocks of dogs, and we would live there all summer. And on the weekends, the hunters would all come up there, and we’d have the camp where we were little slaves.

We had to take care of the place, chop wood, build a fire, skin the deer when you shot a deer you had to skin the deer. We were just little slaves. But in return for which we got to hunt, like for free. They all paid chunks of money. I don’t know what they paid.

MG: So how did you handle your provisions as far as staying out there all summer? Did you –

GG: We had – Well, we were in great shape. We had all these different little vehicles, jeeps and stuff up there, and we had charge accounts downtown, in stores. They all knew us. We’d go in and stock up and we ate better than anybody ever ate. Plus, now and then, we’d go on a kick and say, we’re going to take care of ourselves, we would just do it ourselves. We’re going to eat what we kill, that’s it, we’re going to. So we would go just live on – If we shot deer, we would eat them, and yada, yada, yada, whatever. And we’d go down to the ranch houses and get eggs, fresh eggs, and vegetables and stuff in the gardens there. We’d do that for a kick, but mostly we just coerced ourselves.

We’d buy anything, fill up the refrigerators with food, and we would, on the pretext that we’re getting ready for the guys to come up for the weekend, but we were scarfing down the food pretty good. They were wonderful days.

MG: That must have been fun, yeah.

GG: Yeah, they were really great days.

MG: And you were saying from like about the time you were 14 or so you were doing this?

GG: Yeah.

MG: And how did you get involved with it?

GG: Well, Dave Freitas was in one of my classmates at both – at Marin Catholic and his folks had these ranches, and I got – I knew them and that's how I got into this. And then on the weekends, when the guys came – they were all the prominent lawyers in Marin County, judges, and so then they tell all their old war stories, so I thought, yeah, of course, this is what I want to do.

MG: So after you graduated from Saint Mary's, you went to Hastings Law School, is that correct?

GG: Yeah. I graduated on a Saturday. I got married on the next Tuesday. And I started Hastings that next September. I had two kids while I was in Hastings. Both my kids were born while I was in law school, and in the course of that I worked at the Freitas law firm. That whole relationship stayed on forever. Freitas law firm, still here in San Rafael. And Dave and I were both in the law firm, clerking, and while we were starting to become lawyers, we were clerking at the law firm. Had I not done that, I never would have ever become a lawyer. I hated law school. I hated it. But I loved what you did as a lawyer. What you got to see law school has no relationship to the practice of law, which is often true of graduate schools, you know?

But I loved it so much, what you did, that I just gritted my teeth and suffered through law school itself. But had I not – was I not clerking and working for these lawyers, and they let me do a lot of things. I'd do briefs and go to court, all this stuff. Had I not done that, I know at the end of my first year I would have said this is stupid, I don't want to do this, and I would have washed out.

MG: That's pretty interesting. How did you make the connection between the academic side and what you were really doing? How did you know that after you got your law degree you would be doing what you really loved to be doing?

GG: Well, see, because I was clerking there at the Freitas firm, I was getting a lot of cases ready for trial, and, in fact, the day after I passed the bar, I tried a case. I mean the case that I had gotten ready. So it was just a natural progression, you know what I mean? And I was very lucky. I watch my grandkids today – My eldest grandson just started University of Oregon. He hasn't a clue what he's going to do. He doesn't even have a fantasy about it. And I always knew that, I always knew exactly, you know what I mean?

And I know now that's very lucky. That's very fortunate to know exactly what you want to do. And I was that way because, one, I knew all these lawyers, I liked what they do, the other, I was experiencing that life by working at the law firm.

So I now understand I was really lucky. A lot of that – There's a lot of angst that goes on with most young people saying what the hell, now what am I going to do, Marty? You know? And I never had that. I just want to be a lawyer, that's it.

MG: So what kind of cases did you take when you were working for that law firm? What were you doing?

GG: We did sort of – That law firm for Marin County was and actually is a fairly big law firm. By that I mean it had eight lawyers. This law firm has 200 lawyers. But it's spread all over the – I mean it's in San Francisco, Sacramento. So Marin County firm with eight lawyers was and is right now a big deal. So in Freitas – at the Freitas law firm, we did sort of everything across the board. We didn't do much divorce and much criminal, but I did, I did, because I'd feel sorry for people and I was a sucker, and I would buy these miscreant stories that they were a victim of circumstance and mistaken identity and stuff, and I learned the hard way about what stories people tell, you know what I mean?

Because I bought it hook, line, and sinker. Guy being framed and all that. So I had to learn by getting burned time and again, with all these bunch of liars and stuff, because they were all miscreants. I mean they were all just what they were charged with. So I did some of it. The head of the firm hated me to do that because that's – he don't make any money doing that, and they were, like his firm is, they're a bottom line firm. So the firm did an enormous amount of probate work, estates and stuff, and I was lucky enough – the senior member was a guy named – was a retired judge named Carl Freitas. And he took a liking to me. He was from the Deer Camp days. Mean he was up there.

MG: Was he Dave's father?

GG: No, Dave's uncle. So he was a pretty old partition gentleman. He had a safe as big as this room – in it were all the wills of his clients. And people were kicking off all over the place. It was about the time that they were – So he took me under his wing and let me do a lot of probate. Was very unusual for a young lawyer. And then he went on a cruise for a year and he gave me his whole probate practice. And so I was closing big multi-million dollar estates and all that. Just a young punk kid. I was like 23 or something, doing probate stuff, and we were really very good. So I did that, but they did a lot of business stuff. Like, they were lawyers for a lot of banks, hospitals and a lot of local businesses.

And then we had a lot to do with the expansion of the Point Reyes National Seashore. We worked – We were the law firm for ranchers and negotiated deals with the Seashore to have the ranches go into the park. We bought. We negotiated the sales. And so

anyway the law firm really did a whole range of stuff. And for them, that was a big deal. I mean that law firm was a big deal.

MG: Well, at what point did you decide to run for supervisor? How did you get involved with that?

GG: So this was much to the dismay of everybody that knew me that I ran for the board of supervisors. Not everybody that knew me, but my poor father threatened he was going to kill himself. My father was the elected county recorder, which later merged with county clerk. And, in effect, if I got there, I'd in fact be his boss. I'd be the board of supervisors and he's – But he's the elected department head but still we decide staffing and all that. Well, that's kind of a weird thing to have to – and so he was in abject dismay, because he thought that I was throwing everything away. When I ran for the board of supervisors, I had just then fulfilled one of my dreams and my father's, and that is I'd become a partner in the law firm, just had become a partner.

And so then so then there was a lot of things going on at county, and the county had this big master plan, and they were going to have freeway lanes wide going out to West Marin, and I lived where I do now, not in the very house, but in San Geronimo Valley. Oh, no. And they had these plans for 10,000 houses there and freeways all over the place, and that's what was going to happen.

MG: Was that part of the San Geronimo Valley plan, too, or was that the county –

GG: That was part of the overall county-wide plan for huge development. That San Geronimo Valley plan, which is part of that. So all of this is going to happen, and I said, I can't let that – I can't have this happen. Because what I thought would happen is just what happened to Belvedere – we'd get run over by development, would lose its character, would lose all the ranches, etc., and I just went out of my mind. I said I can't do it. I can't let this happen. So I ran around for a long time to look for somebody to run for supervisor, because the incumbent supervisor of that district was a guy named Bud Barr. He was the former mayor of San Rafael and great big guy, like 6'8", formidable, and he was all for all this development.

And that was, by the way, in those days, that was the deal. At that time, 1.1 million building sites in West Marin. I mean it would be – Had that allowed to be, it would have been just like the peninsula is, where you drive down there and you can tell the communities apart by road signs. That's what was going to happen. Anyway, I couldn't stand that, so I couldn't find somebody to run credible, and I ran. So my – the law firm almost killed itself. They don't want me ever – I mean it was like, what, are you out of your mind? We don't want some piss ant county supervisor. And they said, if you do this, you'll have to leave here. And I said, well, but, and you don't have to do this.

And I mean I'm trying to think what I – I mean monetarily, I think I was making about \$100,000.00 or \$125,000.00 then – that's in '71 or '72, which was a lot, good money then. And the board paid \$14,000.00, board of supervisors. So my father said I was out

of my mind. And so did the law firm. And they spent the better part of six months trying to convince me to wake up and say it was a joke and I was just kidding.

MG: Do you remember anybody that you approached to try to get to run instead of you?

GG: No. No, I don't, now. And so what we ended up doing was Barbara Boxer and I ran as a ticket. See, this is '72. And we saw, both of us saw, we were members of a group called Marin Alternative, which was like a local counterpart to a then nationwide thing called Common Cause, which all of these things have gone out of existence. And it was like an alternative, you know, to Democrats and Republicans and all. So the Marin Alternative came from the left. And the big preservationists from the county. And Boxer and I ran on sort of on a ticket to save Marin, and isn't life interesting? I win, she loses. Now, she's United States Senator, and I was only ever a county supervisor. But that's what we ran on – that to reverse what was the intended build out for Marin. That's what we ran on.

MG: You were saying that at the time it was kind of expected that everybody would – development was a thing, and progress, and that kind of thing. What was it that inspired the people of Marin to go along with your idea to save Marin? What was that turning point?

GG: Well, about the time I was running, there were several things happening. One was they were developing a county-wide plan that was very controversial. And it demonstrated what would happen, what was going to happen to Marin, if we just let it go, like under the existing plans it showed that there would be 12 lanes in the hub in San Anselmo, for example, 12 lanes of freeways there. It showed freeways going across to West Marin with graphics. These were in the works. I mean this wasn't like speculative. And it totally freaked everybody out. They had all these meetings in movie theaters and the town hall. Just citizens saying, my god, we can't – we can't tolerate this.

And build out of West Marin, as I say, to hundreds of thousands of people. And it was considered – well, what are you talking about? That's what happens. I mean that's what you do. That's how you get your taxes. That's why you have to have growth. I mean it was inconceivable that you don't. That you don't just go along with that. Everybody was – I mean all the elected kind of people were. So in '72, when a bunch of us ran not only for the board of supervisors, but for city council and stuff, we had sort of a whole new deal, and we weren't going to accept the status quo, and we were going to – So we really were swept in by a tide. If we were just out there running around, saying this, saying we can do this, I don't think it would happen. But the public was aware of the things that were going to happen and radical changes, you know what I mean?

And in my case, that's what did it. My case, I couldn't even get my own relatives to support me, because one of the things I was committed to was a concept called A60 zone-oh ranchlands 1A – one unit per 60 acres – now, that's a good way to get rid of subdivisions. But to my relatives, who all had these ranches and had been there for generations, they thought it was time for their ship to come in, and they were slated for

all these subdivisions, etc., just like the Freitas family did here. They had seen Terra Linda happened, San Marin, Marin would – all was just like, it's our turn, right? And along comes me running saying, oh, no, actually, we're not going to let any of that happen. Oh my god.

All the West Marin ranchers, etc., were all totally against me, totally against me, saying I was going to send them back to the Stone Age. And so years later, after I'd been there a while, I did a lot of things that helped ranching, and they loved me by the end, the ranching community, agriculture loved me, but then at the time I first ran, they hated me, thought I was a flower child. One of my logos was a California poppy and they said, yeah, go smoke the poppies, leave us alone. And so was a very close election. I probably only won by 500 votes or so, I mean.

MG: So a number of you were part of this Marin Alternative?

GG: Yeah.

MG: And did you have –

GG: It's all faded away. Nobody even knows what that is anymore.

MG: Did you have a strategy? I mean was it a concerted effort to go out and have a number of you run for all these offices?

GG: It was, sort of. And they had these endorsement meetings at the – Maybe there was 100-150 members or so and they had Music College of Marin and they – and Barbara said – Barbara Boxer was really interesting because she said she wanted to run. So did her husband. They had a hell of a time. I forget what that vote was, but they had a hell of a time deciding between the two of them. Remember, at the time, I shouldn't say remember, but she had never been in office, so now she is a state senator, but she was nothing then, nor was I. I was on school board.

MG: Why did you run for that?

GG: Because my kids were in the grammar school and I wanted to change it around. I wanted to change the educational platform that they had. And we did.

MG: From what to what?

GG: Well, it was kind of an old style of things, sat the kids in rows, spanked them on the hands with rulers and that kind of a thing, classic little West Marin school, right? And we wanted to have much more progressive stuff. We had all read all these progressive books at the time. So we ran and we got three seats on the board and we changed the curriculum so there's three programs still here today. We had a program called the open classroom. You just go there and say, well, I feel like going to the beach today. You could. Then all the way to a real strict one. Oh, real controversial. 500 people would

come to these little school board meetings, and they thought we were a bunch of communists.

Anyway, that was the one thing I had done, but it was totally selfish. I wanted our kids to have a better – what the hell were those books called? Summer Hill or something like that.

MG: Open, free education.

GG: So that's where I'm from. I mean that's way before you were born.

MG: Well, you were talking about flower children and so forth. How much of that movement were you actually involved in? The hippie movement.

GG: I mean not so much, except I was an anti-war guy and stuff in '68, so a few years before this, but I wasn't out there too much. I was smoking my share of dope and stuff, but I was always scared of – I was afraid of serious drugs, so I never did them, not because of morals, but because I thought you go and you wreck your brain, cocaine or any of that. So we were relative libertines about stuff, but on one hand, but we were sort of careful, because I was in the law, and I wouldn't do something totally whacked out.

MG: And you were talking about the ranchers who were your relatives. How are you actually related to some of the ranchers?

GG: We're all cousins, that's the best way to do it. It's a total seamless web. I mean I remember one time my mother said, I said, no, no, I don't know, somebody said, do you know Gertrude Giacomini? I said, no, we're not related. My mother said, never say that. Because you are. You are. We all are, somehow. So it's a whole string of them. They got a big family came from Italy, and there's 12 brothers and sisters. This is Toby and Waldo and all these old timers. Now they're all dead. But they were the big – and they came from ranching communities in Italy, since I been there, and you really can see where they came from.

MG: What part of Italy?

GG: They came from a place called Chiavenna, which is up near the Swiss border. And there you have a ranch – a big deal is to have 12 cows. A guy walking around milking 12 cows. These ranches here have to have 1,000 or 2,000 or they go broke. It's a whole other deal. So they were Italian, Swiss-Italian, right up against the border. And they, and the Portuguese, came over here and settled Marin. So all the ranchers are either Portuguese or Italian. They're all hopelessly intermarried. When I was very young, pretty young, started to feel my oats, I remember going to a Chamarita or something, there was 200-300 people there and I fell in love with this girl I was dancing with, and my mother or father, I forget which one of them, say, Gary, that's a cousin. Because I'm going to change my whole life, right? On it. So yeah, okay, they're all related somehow or another.

MG: You said you went to a jamboree?

GG: Chamarita.

MG: What's that?

GG: That's a Portuguese celebration, kind of, a dance.

MG: So once you got elected by 500 or so votes, what did you do to start changing things around?

GG: Well, the first week I was on the board, we had a midnight meeting and we reversed the – We overturned the San Geronimo Valley Community Plan at midnight one night, just threw it out, no notice, nothing. Three to two vote, threw it out.

MG: Did they have that – what is – the Brown Act back then, or was it – where you have to have open meetings?

GG: Yeah, they did, but we believed it – We handled it very differently than today's boards do. The Brown Act, to us, meant we've got to be careful, and you've got to have some people around, so like our view of the Brown Act was you were fine if you were in a public restaurant, because there were people there, and that's where we did all of our business. We never were surprised by anything we ever did, I mean the way anybody voted or anything else, was all hassled out ahead of time. These guys today, they're not allowed to talk to each other now. I mean two of you can, but they can't talk to three, because that's called serial violation or something because you concocted a way to get three votes. It's just inconceivable to me to understand.

Like today, many times, I'm close to all the, not all, not close to Susan Adams, but I'm close to all the other supervisors, and a lot of times they'll say to me, "Go find out what Kinsey's going to do about this," because of course I go see anybody, right? So I report back to the supervisors, and it's got to be absurd. But so were we on the other end. I mean we really – we sort of really arranged things, you know? Like that three to two vote to throw out the plan in the middle of the night, I mean I was – I said to the board, I ran on that, we're going to do it. There's a great old supervisor, wasn't old then, but named Bob Romiguere, who's a conservative guy, who I liked a lot, and he and I were just dead opposite on – like he hated A60, thought it was communist plot, confiscatory, and when we overthrew the master plan, he was catatonic.

And he said, my god it took five or ten years to do this, and you overturn it in one day? And all the remnant of that plan – only thing is you see that golf course there. See, the golf course was the first thing, and then around it were going to be thousands of houses. They built a golf course and we wiped out all the houses. Oh, Jesus.

MG: So they had already built the golf course?

GG: Yeah. So I mean it was dicey. I mean if you could get away with it. But in those days, we could do whatever we want. And we had a great county lawyer, Doug Maloney, I don't know if you know, but he was strong, and he defended us and went all the way to the Supreme Court on A60 zoning and he won. And so we really galloped around the county and changed a lot of things. The main thing we did was stop all that development in West Marin with A60. We were – well, let me see. 1.1 million housing sites when I got there, and after we had enacted A60 everywhere, there were only 3,000 left, and all of those had to be inside the existing communities, like, say, the town of Point Reyes, you could build out on, you could, etc., but all the lands around it were all preserved in agriculture.

So that was the main key. Now, by the way, that didn't come easy. It took about eight years to do that, because you couldn't just do it in one night like I wanted to. You had to do each parcel, give them notice, they come there with their lawyers and fight because – see, one day, you had 1,000 houses, and the next day, you had three houses. I mean the values that you – we had just sucked away, were a lot, right? So there was really a lot of battles that went on for years, and lawsuits.

MG: And Doug Maloney was like heavily –

GG: He defended all that, yeah.

MG: I remember there was one in the Nicasio – some guy from Chicago who was –

GG: Baranchik.

MG: That's right.

GG: He came from Chicago and he's a big, big deal in Chicago. He was a huge developer. And he came here and he bought a ranch – I want to say 400 acres and whatever. He hadn't looked into the zoning, etc., and our zoning __ was already there. A60. So he wanted to build I think 49 condominiums or something, real high end condominiums on these ridges and look down, have great views. And what he was entitled to was six. So one night – do you remember the old Velvet Turtle restaurant in what's now where Sutter's Urgent Care is? Up there on the hill? Well, there was a restaurant there. So one night, Barancik came with a bunch of cronies and took me to dinner, and we're sitting there, and he must have had eight or nine of these big, big brute guys.

And he said to me, so, I came out here and spent millions of dollars on this land, and I'm not going to just have six crummy units, and so what does it take? I'm going to have 49. That's what I want is 49. What do you want? And I said – what I knew enough about Chicago is that's the way they did stuff then. In fact, they have the Chicago City Council guys have – they have a printout of what it costs for a lot split or – today, they do. You give them \$10,000, you get a lot split, and \$20,000, you get this. So he said, so I – and so

I said, well, what you say, and he said, well, what, I understand you're the guy that decides this. And I said, yeah, I'm the guy, that's right, I am, it's my district, and what I say is going to happen.

And he said, "Well, so, what do you want?" And I said, "No, you get six." I said, "I'm open to put them in a nice area where it has a nice view, but you get six." So we argue back and forth and all of a sudden he turned to his guys and he said, "This isn't the guy. Go get me the guy." And I laughed and I said – I found out later he was really a terror in Chicago. And I don't know if you know Chicago, but if you go there, they have this beautiful drive called Lakeside drive, and on the water side, I guess it's on Lake Michigan, there's no development. You just see it. Except there are five or six high rises. They're all his guys. And he bought approvals. So he thought pissant little county, right, no problem. And he took that to the United States Supreme Court when we denied that – all the way to the United States Supreme Court to overturn what we did.

And had he – That would have thrown out all of A60, not just on his properties, so that was really a big deal.

MG: And after the county won that, did that mean that all the other fights for A60 were sort of – went away because –

GG: Two things happened, one, yeah, because he really had the resources, you see, and these ranchers, they're all big talkers, but they don't like to pay a lot of legal fees and so he was carrying their water, really, because that would have been a precedent. They would have struck all these A60s as confiscatory, see? And not only confiscatory but exclusionary, so it would stop people – it would wreck affordable housing, because you're not going to have any affordable housing on one unit on 60 acres, right? That was his contention – the effect of the zoning excluded minorities and everything else. Now, he didn't give a shit about minorities. But it was a very good legal theory. Today, probably, that would win.

I would hate that case to go to court today, because they would look at it as it is exclusionary. In fact, you see the county's having trouble with that. But anyway, we won that – 5 to 4 decision or something, otherwise the whole place would have been a whole different story.

MG: Interesting. I understand and you had said that after a while the dairy farmers were really against you at first with this A60 and so but over time they kind of came around. What did you do to help that happen?

GG: Well, I'll tie that back into the question you asked me a minute ago, and I didn't quite answer. You said, did that Baranchik involvement make everything else go away – they abandoned their cases – it had that effect on that. And the other phenomena that happened was by then, by the time that case went to the Supreme Court, because it takes a long time, a phenomenon happened which we were shocked at – we meaning board of supervisors and Maloney and me especially – to our shock, they were selling A60 land

and it hadn't lost value. We should have known. See, we thought we had diminished the value a lot, because if a guy had 1,000 houses, now he had six, that's less value. But Maloney thought it was enough, because you still had a viable interest and you could do agriculture and you're not entitled to the highest and best use, you're just entitled to a regional return.

But we thought we probably diminished the value about 80 percent, but we thought that was sustainable. But, instead, what happened is wealthy people came along and went, hey, you know what? I can buy a ranch out here for 1,000 acres cheaper than I can buy a house in Tiburon, right? Little – and right. So these rich guys came along and were buying up these West Marin ranches, and the West Marin ranches are going, not bad. In other words, they were getting – and then they didn't have to do the trouble of getting permits and subdivisions, know what I mean? They were getting a fortune by just selling the land. So that also made them go, oh, well, this might not be so bad. And to this day, that's been true. Land is – it's all supply and demand.

MG: So do you think that by the fact that there weren't allowed tract houses and so forth weren't allowed that wealthier people saw it more desirable, therefore they'd have plenty of land around them, and wouldn't be like Marin would or something?

GG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I mean now I have a lot of clients here. They come, they do that. They buy land and buy a big ranch and want to see what they can do with it. And so they – a lot of times they crash and burn and I always look at them and I try – I try and wise them up to what a real ranch is like. They don't understand. They think you have a Palomino horse or – and it's all like tra-la-la. Of course, it's hard work, all that stuff is. I've tried talking to a lot of clients, and I say, you're going to be – up to three months, you're going to want to give it away, you're going to be so – so some of them listen to me, some don't, and then a few months later, they get rid of it. But anyway, no, imagine, you get 1,000 acres, you look down on two miles of bay, and good god, for what you'd have to pay for it – I'm not kidding you. In Tiburon – pay several million dollars for a house in Tiburon, pay several million dollars a year, they get 1,000 acres.

Their kids are all happy, their grandkids are running around on horses, you know. But anyway, why the ranches turned around was that it was that once they got there and we had – did screw them I did all that A60 and all that A60 stuff was done on three to two votes.

MG: On three to two votes?

GG: Three to two. Three to two. Three to two. So if they just had changed one vote, they wouldn't have been, in their view, screwed. So what I did right away was I – what shocked all the ranchers – I then looked up – I wanted to prove to them, and I meant it, that I cared about agriculture and I wanted it to be sustained. And so I would – I started to do things for them. For example, water quality control came along and said these cows can't shit in the bay anymore, we're going to close you down. And they were all frantic. And I mean in all the ranches along Tomales Bay you can have zero runoff. You can't

have any runoff. Well, they didn't know what to do. So I ran – and they were all – they were starting to sell their quotas. You know what that means?

You and I can't just go milk a cow. You have to have a quota, you have to have permission to sell the milk of one cow or the milk of 1,000 cows or whatever. So when you can tell a ranch is going to go down as they sell their quota – their ability to milk x number of cows – and the ranchers are starting to go down like corn stalks –

MG: So instead of –

GG: So I think that –

MG: I can sell ten cows' milk, I can only sell five kind of thing? They were selling –

GG: Hundreds of thousands. So I knew that ag was going to go away, I mean it was going away. So I raced out there and I came up with a program, took it to the board of supervisors, took it on a Tuesday, off agenda, wasn't even anything on the agenda, and I did a multimillion dollar program which was that we'll build – we, the county, will build facilities that will contain all the cow manure, right? We'll do that. And for the ranchers. We'll pay, I think, half of the cost of it. Was about \$1 million of ranch. Well, ranchers, they couldn't even believe it. Not only would we build it, but we designed it. We'd have our engineers design it so that we get permission ahead of time from water quality so that if you do this, you build this facility, we're going to sign off.

Because the ranchers were terrified to go spend all this money and some bureaucrat would come along and say, sorry, nice try, but – so we would – because the county was taking the lead, we would go get – we would design a system, go get it signed off by the state, and then build it, advance them the money, right? Oh, the ranchers, oh, and then we did other things like that. Like, we would go testify in favor of milk price increases in Sacramento. Well, no political people ever did that, because there are way more consumers than there are ranchers, right? The ranchers started to think, wait, wait, they're not just screwing us. They thought my deal was to zone them to the Stone Age, that I could just zone them so that they always said to me your rich friends from over the hill could drive out and see a cow or two.

You just zone it and freeze it in place. But when I started to develop these other programs that helped them a lot, they started to look at it differently. And so when we did that, a lot of things happened. One, they stayed. And the other is they started to have faith in the county and the government, and they started to invest in it. You can always tell about ranchers, if they start to let things go, you know. So they started to fix their fences, fix their barns, stuff like that, and that got to be a whole – and now the ranchers are in pretty good shape. Now, they have problems, because it's hard to milk cows. Probably pretty soon there won't be any milk cows left here.

But it's not because of the county. The county's not screwing them. So anyway, over time, they thought I was like a little hero, and so as the elections went on, obviously, as

MALT was formed as a result of Prop 13. It was sup Giac that saw a county problem the he then created an org and he, as a county rep, had the papers drawn up. He specifically stated "when I formed it". Faber and Straus were publicly credited, but in reality were not the founders. The impetus for formation was a COUNTY NEED based on Prop 13 and it was thus founded by the COUNTY SUPERVISOR. e then gave himself, as a supervisor, a seat on the board.

time went on, I would get – I would go to the ranchers and have a couple of fundraisers and I didn't need anything else. Because once they're on your side.

MG: So can you talk a little bit about MALT [Marin Agricultural Land Trust], your involvement with MALT?

GG: Yeah. In 1978, Prop 13 passed. Prop 13 cut the property taxes by 54 percent. And one day – I mean it passed June 1st, it was effective July 1st. We had to fire 54 percent of the people at the county. I mean it was just terrible. We had them at the exhibit hall, and had to do this mass firing – oh, god. Well, and the other thing is we could no longer help with any open space or agriculture or anything like that because the open space budget was cut by 54 percent, too. So a group of us – a guy named Ralph Grossi, who's still around and he's got a ranch, ranches out in West Marin – Ralph Grossi and I and Phyllis Faber and Ellen Straus got this idea of creating – well, and so I had Doug Maloney draw up the incorporation papers.

And we created it. This theory. The theory of MALT is it will buy off the development rights from these ranches. And that the ranchers keep the fee. The ranchers keep the place, but MALT buys off the value of the potential development of the ranch. That's of great value to ranchers because they have expanding families, most of whom don't live on the ranch, and they want some money. There's no – they don't have any fun – they're not there in the morning to pick fresh eggs and stuff. They're living in condos somewhere, and they want to sell the damn ranch and get their money. So the big advantage that MALT has is when, say, we go in there and you value the development rights and you give a rancher \$1.5 million, they pay off all these family members and everybody leaves them alone. That's really what happens.

And the other thing that happens is they get killed on death, and they have to pay huge death taxes. And then when MALT comes along and buys, pays the development, buys the development, they can pay the taxes. Plus, buying off their development rights, you take down the value of the land, so the taxes aren't so high. See what I mean? So there's all kinds of advantages to MALT, and MALT goes and gets its money all over the place.

MG: Sorry, I didn't see the connection between the Prop 13 and MALT.

GG: It's because we, the county, no longer could help them, help the ranchers. We couldn't do any of the programs that I told you about that we created. We couldn't pay for them, etc.. So we, the county, was going to be out of the game, and we couldn't help them in any economic way, and MALT was our way. We stumbled into – this could be a solution. So it's really sort of out of desperation. Do you see what I mean?

MG: Yeah.

GG: So if the government can't do it, what can? Well, we create this non-profit and so now I mean its goal is to buy I think, well, 84,000 acres or so of all the viable ranchlands here. And it's bought about 24,000-30,000 so far, so it's doing fine. And it's never lost –

We've never lost a ranch to development, you know what I mean? Because MALT swoops in. And when somebody's thinking – death in the family or something, my god, we got to do something – MALT likes to swoop in and say, well, we're here. What if we come in and buy off the development rights instead of selling it to some developers?

MG: And so the worst that would happen if it got sold for development would be one per 60 acres?

GG: No, we buy off all of them. So if there's an A60 ranch, make it easy, say it's a 600 acre ranch, then they're entitled to ten units. MALT will go in and buy nine of those units, pay a lot of money for them, so that the ranch gets one more, which is ranch billings, you see. No, we take all the development rights off, all of them, no, no, it doesn't, you don't get to build out A60, you get to build out nothing. And when they buy

MG: I see. And if MALT weren't there, it would be A60?

GG: If MALT weren't there, they would checkerboard these properties, you know what I mean? Cut them up into 60-acre parcels and sell little ranchettes everywhere.

MG: You've accomplished quite a lot, given that –

GG: Yeah.

MG: You said 84,000 acres?

GG: So when – that's their goal, 84,000 acres. Now, we do a combination of things. I was on it for so long, wait, when I formed it, I created a slot for the supervisor of the fourth district, which was me. And all of the rest of them had term limits, but I didn't. So then I was there for 20 years, I guess, and now Kinsey's there. And he doesn't have term limits either. And so we – I'm really proud of MALT. I mean it's done way more than we even dreamed. And it's viewed very well by funding groups, you know? Because MALT does its job, it preserves it, so it gets – it does pretty well. The Marin Community Foundation has given it tens of millions of dollars over the years, contributed money, so they could buy easements, etc. So it's been a great, great, great success story.

And it's the biggest reason why – See, I was always worried just about zoning, I mean A60, but really, zoning is a holding action, see. Any day, the board of supervisors, on a three-two vote, could change zoning. Now, it's not very likely, because of the pressures – the political pressure not to do that would be pretty great, but especially when things are in so much trouble now, all of a sudden you say, wait, we're just going to open up this little area because it would be – it would get a lot of taxes, right? You know what I mean? And I could see a time in which they start to say, well, we're going to free up some land, you know? So I always wanted to buy it in perpetuity. And that's what MALT does, so it can never be developed. See, but zoning is – zoning can turn on an election.

MG: Can you talk about the – your involvement with the GGNRA and Point Reyes National Seashore as far as working with the Burtons and so forth?

GG: The Burtons? That was a wonderful era. And it's really a bygone era. Nothing that we all did in those days could be replicated today, but in those days, the Burtons were in sway. They were very powerful in congress. Phil Burton missed becoming speaker by like one vote or something. So he – and right here is this woman, and here's Margie Goodman who's been my – was my aide for 24 years, and she was loved by the Burtons. I lent her to John Burton when he ran for Congress, and she ran his campaign and got elected. And then Phil Burton started to create these big, massive park bills across the country. And not just here.

And they called it Park Barrel. And he just did miracles all across the country, and he'd get Republican and Democrat support because he had something for everybody, right? So the countywide plan that we adopted has three zones: the far west corridor; and then inland rural, which is A60 and all that where MALT works; and the far west one is the coastal recreational core. So there, the goal was to get as much as could in the parks, the seashore, into the seashore, and expand it. There wasn't a GGNRA then, there was just the seashore. So the Burton – really, the Burtons would do whatever I said. We would hold these hearings.

The Burtons just said, look, we don't know the county, hold some hearings, we'll let everybody know that we're going to do – we'll do a bill that does what you do. I said, we – I go back to Washington, we go get drunk together, Phil and I, and John, and we'd sit with white tablecloths and we'd get felt pens and draw the area of the next expansion. It was to be like 40,000 acres and stuff like that, right? So we made mistakes, because we had a few drinks. Sometimes we put whole towns in the thing. And we would – they would then take it back to his aides and stuff and they would put it on a nursing home bill or something totally unrelated, just run it through the congress, and all of a sudden, the seashore would be expanded by 18,000 acres or whatever. We had so much fun.

And we made mistakes, as I say. One time we did a bill that was just insane. I mean they really did put in the towns of Point Reyes and Inverness because just the draftsman in Washington, they didn't know. So we said, go put these things in, and they put the towns in. So I'll never forget all hell broke loose. John Burton called me and he said, you got to stop the phone calls, we're getting killed. And I said, well, what do you want in a park? What do you want? You want 20,000 acres, 40,000 acres? And I'll never forget what he said. I don't give a fuck what you put in the park. Stop the phone calls. I don't care if you put it all in or not, just stop the phone calls.

So we had hearings right away, oh, well, there's been this mistake, and we took the towns out and it all is fine. Now, as the years went on, we just kept doing that, and doing that, and doing that, and doing that. And then one day Phil ran out of money, but we wanted the other sides – you know how Highway 1 goes down and the west side is all Point Reyes Seashore, and on the east side, it wasn't nothing. Okay. So we wanted to expand

this seashore, but there was no more money. But Phil Burton found a bunch of money in the National Recreation Area budget, big federal budget, and he said, look, we'll create another park. I said, please, two federal parks across the street from each other. He said, oh, just for a little while. We're just going to do it now and I'm going to use this as a cash register.

I said, okay. So he drew some lines and put all this shit on the east side of Highway 1. You know, from the Golden Gate Bridge to Point Reyes, right? And so they did that, and they did that, and then they acquired it. His plan was, of course, to merge them. I mean it's absolutely insane to have decaled cars, GGNRA, and Point Reyes seashore going down to the same street – but then he died. Because now they each have – now you can never merge them, because they have constituencies. You know what I mean? They have supporters – support GGNRA for the – and so if you talk about merging, you get killed. And all the guys that knew about that are all either dead or out of power.

Jerry Friedman, did you ever know – Jerry Friedman was my appointee to the county planning commission, and he was a great ally of the Burtons, and he was always the draftsman about these expansions. And Burton trusted him a lot. And he died. And Phil Burton's dead, John Burton and all the people that could say, well, wait a minute, you know what we meant to do was this – they either aren't around or aren't in power. So those two damn parks sitting like that, cheek to jowl, double administrations, I mean it's absolutely insane. Absolutely insane.

MG: Well, why are you saying that this couldn't happen today? What you and the Burtons did as far as the bills?

GG: Because they have these – I tried a few years ago, and said, you know we could do that. Do you know of a woman named Amy Meyer? There were these San Franciscans that were very big on parks and they think that they're their parks. And they are very protective of – it happens to be they're very protective of the GGNRA. Why? Because they always hated what we did to the seashore, wherein we let the ranchers stay. They have leasebacks. As long as they don't wreck the land, the ranchers can stay. It's part of the deal. She hated that. I mean Amy Meyer and another guy named Ed Wayburn. Big contributors to the Democrats and big players, big with Pelosi, big with Feinstein, big everywhere.

Any event, they – when GGNRA was created, they loved that, because GGNRA did not have those policies. In the GGNRA, you don't get – ranchers don't get a leaseback.

MG: Why didn't they like the ranchers having leasebacks?

GG: Because they're park purists, you know what I mean?

MG: The wilderness people?

GG: Exactly. To them, the park is a park, and so you get – you're not going to have any other uses, nothing compatible, cows are bad, they shit and they eat grass. And I'm telling you, they just – it's just like antithetical to them. Therefore, they – I was working with Brian O'Neill. Then, he died. The superintendent of the GGNRA, really good guy. And he and his counterpart, Don Neubacher, who ran the Seashore for a long time, I'd sit down with the two of them, say, this isn't sane. Come on, boys, let's put these two together. Because they learned that it was insane. And so O'Neill signed a pact that although it's GGNRA, these lands would be managed by the Seashore, okay?

I said, now that you've done that, just transfer to the Seashore. So they were toying with that. Then he drops dead. And then Neubacher gets transferred. Now, Neubacher – because Feinstein was mad at him, he didn't want to go, but he's now running Yosemite or something, right? So this is what I mean. These are the people that could have done that. Those two superintendents, if they said, this is only makes sense, that would have done it, you see what I mean? But now you have both of the superintendents are new and they love their turf. I don't even know who I would talk to any more about it, and they wouldn't listen, weren't going to listen to me.

MG: Well, as far as the getting the bills through, getting the park extensions through, would that be something that could be done again today, or is that –

GG: No.

MG: And that's because –

GG: It's park expansions. No, you can't do it today. There's no money. And the Republicans wouldn't allow it. Those days, it was very bipartisan. I mean the concept of preservation of parks wasn't Republican or Democrat, and everybody got their share, each state, you know what I mean? But now, the hostility and the polarization is just horrible. So I don't see it for the foreseeable future when you're umpteen trillion in debt. No, I'm afraid, on a federal level, what you see is what you got for parks, you know what I mean? At least for decades.

MG: Can you talk about the Marin Open Space District and the early days of its founding and your involvement there?

GG: Well, what was great is as I say the same day I was elected, not because I was elected, but it happened to be on the ballot, and the same time, and it's been a really – I think a really great success. And it passed really strongly and then for many years it had nice resources to go acquire land. As the years have gone on, though, then Prop 13 came along and cut them by 54 percent. So their acquisition money almost evaporated because they need money to maintain what they have, to keep up the open space and etc. So they don't have any damn acquisition money. So the thing is sort of moribund now. They have to – they're doing a real small thing and I'm trying to help them with now for 22 acres, big deal. I mean, to them, 22 acres was nothing when you're talking about tens of thousands before.

MG: Is that the acquisition out in –

GG: San Geronimo.

MG: San Geronimo Valley, the Morrison –

GG: Yeah, it's called Morrison. I mean but I'm just saying that's their idea today of a big deal and they can't do that alone. They want to – they're trying to get community foundations, some others to help them, and they got –

MG: Coastal Commission.

GG: Coastal Conservancy to kick in, and they could only afford \$100,000.00. So I mean I'm just saying it's a sad – it's a skeleton of what it used to be. And I'm afraid it will be, because for the foreseeable – I'm afraid all they're going to be able to do is take care of what they got. And I don't see any public appetite to vote for that, you know what I mean? People are in trouble right now and everything takes a two-thirds vote. I think the general feeling in the county is we got enough open space. I don't think that that's right, but I think it's a feeling and they're not going to go, well, two-thirds to tax itself, I don't think.

MG: What kind of involvement have you had in this Morrison property acquisition?

GG: Oh, I've had quite a bit, because I represented him, and he came here, was going to do a development. I said, no, not going to help you do a development, but I'll help you if you'll sell it to the Open Space District, and he didn't want to, because they wouldn't pay what he got into it, and I said but I know but you were a fool, you got way too much money in here, and he's got \$1 million in it, and appraised for \$650,000.00 or something like that. Anyway, finally, I talked him into it, because he tried to get some private sales and he couldn't, so now he's got to deal with the Open Space District.

MG: What was your involvement as far as some of the earlier acquisitions, like Roy's Redwoods, for the Open Space District?

GG: Well, how the supervisors worked in the day is when we had money – It was based on money. We were pretty collegial about it all. So like I said, I want to buy Roy's Redwoods, and everybody said, okay. Because it was in my district, okay? So that's what I would do. When you say, "what'd you do?" I'd say, "I want this." And they all did that. You see what I mean? And it was fairly – So we sort of looked at it would be fair, pretty much. You divide the money into fifths, not all the same day or the same year, but over time, so that you acquire either acreage or commitment of money, about the same to each supervisor district, you see, so that's what we did.

MG: That was regarding open space?

GG: Yeah.

MG: As far as the entire pie for the county funds, would it pretty much be the same thing?

GG: Pretty much, except that we didn't like somebody, then we'd screw them. Like roads and stuff. There was – sometimes we – three of us wouldn't like someone of the supervisors and they wouldn't get any road money, so. But open space, we were always fairly fair about it. The last open space thing I was able to do – The last open space I did just before I left office – so that's '96 – was a big strip of land in San Geronimo Valley. It's seven miles long. In fact, they named it after me. And we, the County, put in \$1 million, and we got money from elsewhere. I guess the foundation – I forget, yeah, maybe the foundation. And that was a big purchase. I think it's 7 miles long. It's 1,700 acres.

MG: The Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve? 7 miles long, and it's also quite wide, too.

GG: Yeah, no, it's big. Anyway, it's really pretty great. And it's funny, for me, now, I meet people all the time, they go, they think I'm dead, you see? Because normally you name stuff after guys and gals when they're dead, right? But that board was very kind to me. I mean they named it after me right there. So people are always shocked to see me wandering around.

MG: What was your involvement as far as the Sky Ranch, preserving that land, and the Giacomini Open Preserve, Open Space Preserve?

GG: Well, it was a mix. I think the deal we struck was they got oh maybe 16 houses or so. They had 150. And we took all – When we acquired it for Open Space, we carved out some little areas for them to keep and to build some houses on them, and they have. I think it was 16 total on the fringes. And that was the deal, seeing that we pay \$2 million, got the rest of it – and they – That was way less than they paid for it, too. So I negotiated. Well, they think I screwed them, but I don't, I think it was pretty fair. They couldn't have. Who else they going to sell it to?

MG: If they hadn't negotiated the deal for the Open Space, would they have been able to develop there?

GG: Well, they had approval for over 100 houses, 120 houses, but they had horrible problems in doing it, because it was so costly to build the road system, to access it. And so I think they couldn't pull it off economically. I think they got in trouble. So the economics really saved us on that.

MG: In the early days, I understand there was some fundraising by – and Doug Maloney wrote some plays – a play called "Miralot" that had to do with raising money for the Open Space. Do you remember that? Were you involved with those plays at all?

GG: He wrote five of them for me. They were big extravaganzas, musicals. That's the way we did. For the Exhibit Hall, I don't know. What's that, 1,000 people come to these. And they were great. And everybody fought to get in the musicals.

MG: Did you participate in them?

GG: Oh, yeah. I was in all the ones that were for me. I was in them. I mean I was in them. He did one for the Open Space District itself only. Maybe that was Merilot. I don't know. I don't remember. But he did one for the Open Space District, and then he did a bunch for me, but over many years, over 20 years.

MG: By "for me," what do you mean?

GG: Campaign. Somebody would make \$20,000.00 or something like that from one of those, which is good. My last campaign – what is this – '92 - \$250,000.00. That's how much I spent. My first campaign I spent \$25,000.00 in '72. So anyways, one, they were a lot of fun, those musicals, and the other is they raised a good chunk of money.

MG: I understand they were pretty funny, too.

GG: Funny as hell.

MG: Funny.

GG: Yeah.

MG: Can you talk a little bit about the Coastal Commission and your participation there?

GG: The Coastal Commission I was on, I was there I think 10 years, something like that. It was a good time for me to go there because the executive director of it was a guy named Peter Douglas, and he lived down in Inverness and I knew him for years. And when I got to the Coastal Commission, it turned out that within a month, well, within the first year of my being there, somehow or another, the Republicans took over. By that I mean the governor was a Republican, I want to say Deukmejian, but I'm not sure. Maybe it was Wilson. I don't know. And the Republicans took the assembly. So they immediately threw off all the people that were on there and they put on eight Republicans whose goal was to fire Peter Douglas and to – they were all – hated the Coastal Act. So I had a field day, because I did – I'm pretty good on soundbites, and I get really riled up and cause these scenes, and I was raging around down in Malibu and all these places. What they were doing, they were doing a scam, they were all on the take, and they all should be indicted, and be in San Quentin and Folsom. Two of them were, by the way, two of them were, went to federal prison, because they were on the take, they really were. Anyway, and I kept doing that, and we saved Peter Douglas's job, because one time, let's see, what happened?

One time, the Republicans were ganging up to fire, and there was a good guy on there, I mean I liked him as a person, and he was the chair. He was a Republican, but he was a good guy, but anyway, they have this late night meeting, all these Republicans, and they figure the next day to fire Peter Douglas, and they work out all this stuff. So, the next day, at the commission meeting, I went up to him and I said, by the way, I had some one go into your room and we tape recorded the whole meeting. So if you dare do this I'm going to play the tape and you guys are going to be indicted and wish you had another life. It was a total lie. I made it up.

And they totally – they totally – they bought it. They thought I did. They thought I had it. So they didn't fire him. And they didn't. They were all looking like this. And they – Peter Douglas knew what I was doing. He said, you'll never get away with this. I said, well, if I do, you'll be here, and if I don't, you'll be fired. Anyway, it was all bogus. I didn't have any tape, but I had it in my hand, I said you want to hear it?

MG: You didn't think that they were going to call your bluff?

GG: I didn't know.

MG: It was a risk.

GG: I didn't have very much to lose. I had to do something, really. And I told all the press about this, so they were all hounding around, because in Southern California, the Coastal Commission is a big deal, and they like me, the press like me, because I do these soundbites and stuff. So they were afraid. They were really afraid they could all get exposed and be indicted and stuff. So I enjoy the Coastal Commission.

MG: There was some work you do with Barbara Boxer as far as the Marine Sanctuary, the Farallones Marine Sanctuary, as I understand. It wasn't going to include Marin County? And the coast?

GG: I don't know that.

MG: Don't remember? My understanding is that you and Barbara worked to expand the Farallon Marine Sanctuary to include the Marin County Coast.

GG: I just don't remember that, because it always, in my recollection of it, always included the – I don't mean always, but the expansion bill always included the Marin Coast. So I don't remember having to fight to – she probably did a bill that expanded it to include the Marin Coast and of course I would have supported that, but I didn't have my little fingerprints all over it.

MG: I'd like to talk about the Buck Fund and the fight to keep it here in Marin. Can you talk about that some?

GG: Yeah, that was one of my favorite escapades. So the history of – Mrs. Buck died, she thinks she's got \$12 million, turns out between her death and the close of probate they had the greatest discovery of oil in the history of the United States on the land. And so all of a sudden it was worth hundreds of millions of dollars. So when they ended the probate, the San Francisco Foundation, who was given the trust, and had a Marin-only clause, so you had to spend the money in Marin, and the San Francisco Foundation takes over. And for many, for years, I was very suspicious of them for the first few years. They had all these artificial rules about funding.

And what I figured they were doing, it ended up true, was they were figuring – were working on a case to say that there wasn't enough need in Marin County and they wanted to spread the money around. Now, of course, if you make up enough rules, and you say, I'm sorry, but I can't spend the money then it's self-induced but you can do that. For example, one of the rules was you never fund a government, never fund a school, a city, a county, whatever. Governments have to stay on their own, they have to raise taxes, see you later. And then you never fund a program for longer than two years. So of course. Anyway.

They had all these programs. Then, they filed a suit. They filed a lawsuit to break the Marin provision of the Buck's will. Marin limitations saying that it – that they do things all over the Bay Area and there's all these needs everywhere and this is obscene to have all this money for Marin. So on the day that they did that, I said, you're a bunch of grave robbing bastards. Headlines everywhere that I would say that because they were a Patrician outfit and they were high of San Francisco society and nobody never called them bastards before. And so Maloney and I got together and we decided that this was not just a legal case, it was a political case, so we embarked on a course to humiliate the foundation and ruin them.

And so I went all around the Bay Area giving speeches about them. And I think probably – What the point I was making was, I was saying anybody if you got money, don't put it in the San Francisco Foundation, because they'll ignore your wishes, right? So as time went on, more and more people were sucking – to anybody they could – still alive, but you're dead, you were dead – but a lot of people have living trusts there and everything else and they were – so the foundation went from just over \$1 billion to about \$200 million, and they were – I mean that was going on all the time. The turning point was a speech I gave at the Commonwealth Club. At the time, in the Bay Area, the general feeling was, "Oh, those bastards, those selfish bastards in Marin, they got all this money, why are they" – etc.

My view was, and I think I did it so vigorously because of my days being a probate lawyer way back with Freitas, the will is sacrosanct. It says you spend it in Marin. God dammit, you find ways to do it. But outside of here, people were all taking this side of the San Francisco Foundation in general. So I gave this speech to Commonwealth Club and they're all hooting and hollering, you selfish bastards, and I said, well, listen, everything good is somewhere. Stanford is somewhere. But you don't say we're not

going to give it an endowment because Palo Alto's got a lot of money or because Stanford's got a lot of money. And the room got a little more quiet.

I said, look, everything good has got to be somewhere, and I said what's wrong with the San Francisco Foundation is they didn't use any imagination, any creativity. They should do great things in Marin that happen to be located in Marin but benefit the whole world. And they, the audience, some guy yelled, "Yeah, like what?" And I said, "Well, like aging. We all age. Why don't we – What if they did something like that? Build a standalone center for age research" and yada-yada? And then the crowd, then they all started thinking about that, and I could feel the room change, and I thought, "Oh shit, I really stumbled on something," but it was just really like spaghetti on the wall. I had not planned to say this.

In any event, then, when that played in the San Francisco papers, to my ecstasy, the guy that drew the will, a guy named Doc Cook, who was Mrs. Buck's lawyer, called up and said, "That's exactly what she would have wanted. That's exactly what she would have wanted." So he hopped on it and said that was a brilliant idea. So we had a fire. We had something really good to do. And so that's how the case was resolved, you see?

MG: Was the case going on at this time?

GG: No. It was right at the edge of trial. And so, but here's what happened. As a result of that, right at the edge of trial, result of that, people saying, what, that's right, they could do things that although located here benefit all the whole world. So the thing I was the most proud about was I got the attorney general in the beginning was on the side of the foundation to break the will.

MG: Attorney General of California?

GG: Yeah. A guy named John Vandecamp. And I took him out. Maloney and I took him to dinner. Met him for dinner somewhere like Richmond or Oakland, in some sleazy place, and I said, "Look, you got to," and he was going to run for governor, and I said, "You guys got to switch sides here. I mean you're trying to break a dead widow's will, and you're going to look like dog shit running for the governorship, right?" And he said, "Well, you're making a lot of noise," and I said, "Yeah, but I haven't targeted you, but I will. You're going to become my new target, instead of the San Francisco Foundation. It's going to be Vandecamp."

And so he said to me, he said, we'll take care of that. So two weeks later, without a word, the attorney general switched sides. I mean they didn't say. They just said they looked into it, etc.. Well, that was this is trial started. So that was a huge thing for us, this attorney general joined the county of Marin against the San Francisco Foundation. So that was a big, really, really, really, really good breakthrough for us.

MG: What kind of influence does the attorney general have on the outcome of the case?

GG: Huge, because they're the – ultimately, the Attorney General of the State of California are the guardians of all trusts there are in the state. They monitor them all, etc., all, all, everywhere. So their opinion is highly regarded by the courts, and so like if they say it's okay to break the will, people are going to listen to that. By like token, when they say we have to protect the sanctity of the will, oh, I loved that, they're going to be listened to, too. Anyway, that phenomenon combined with the fact that in discovery, when we took deposition stuff, we started to find out all really bad kinds of stuff about the way the foundation did all that.

That it was, in fact, I had been saying, in all my speeches, this was totally calculated. The foundation was getting ready to do this for years, while in all the minutes and everything, and all their memos, it showed that. It showed their strategy was to demonstrate that it was impossible to spend the money in Marin and the way to do that was to have a lot of rules and regulations that made it impossible to spend it. So it was all – so that combined with the fact that they were hemorrhaging and they were down to about \$200 million – sounds like a lot, but it's not when you used to have \$1 billion.

So after three months of trial, I don't know if you know, the case never finished. I mean, they surrendered and said, fine. And they gave up. And that's how this Marin Community Foundation was created. That's also how the Buck Center was created.

MG: I understand there was some kind of plan by one of the board members of the San Francisco Foundation to start a town on the Synanon property?

GG: A new town, yeah. One time, they took us out to dinner. Took the whole board of supervisors out to dinner.

MG: The San Francisco Foundation?

GG: At Jack's restaurant. This is before the lawsuit. And they had bought all this Synanon land in West Marin.

MG: Using Buck Fund money?

GG: No. You know what? I'm not sure about that. They might have. I can't remember how they – they might have. Anyway – they bought maybe 10,000 acres, all this, and – were you around in the Synanon days? I mean everybody hated them. They were just dangerous and they were scary and all this stuff. So they thought they had done everybody a big favor. So when they had this dinner, they said, at the foundation, Rhoda Goldman, great society woman, trillionaire and all that, she was the chair of it at the time, and she said – they said to all of us little piss ant supervisors, "So, we got this now, and we're going to build a thing like Reston, Virginia. We're going to do a new town, and it's going to be totally self-sustained, it's going to be this, and it's going to do that, and it's going to show people a new way of living and all that stuff." So I said, "No, well, actually, no, you're not going to do any of that, because that's all agriculture land." And I said, "What you get is –" and I divided by whatever they had, 10,000 acres, by 60, and

said you get 12 units somewhere, and we'll let you know where they get to be. And she shook her finger at me. And she said, "You think we wasted all this millions of dollars to have a god damned ranch? And etc. We're going to do what we want. I said, "You're not going to do anything of the kind. You're not. We're not going to change anything. You would have to put roads out there." All against the countywide plan. Because by then we had rezoned everything. And I said, "We're not going to throw over the county-wide plan just because you made a bad investment. We're not going to have a new town there, we're not going to have roads. See, there's no sewer system, there's no facilities, no. And so we had this huge fight and they said we'll take you to the cleaners."

MG: So you were talking to this Rhoda Goldman –

GG: That was about a new town, and all like another Reston. So we refused to do that. All the supervisors said we're not going to go change the countywide plan, not going to do that. Very cantankerous.

MG: What was their interest in having this town?

GG: Well, I don't know. I guess they – It was their way to maybe get famous. It was their way. You asked me earlier, and I think now that I'm talking about this, they must have used Buck money to buy it. I think it was their way to think, well, we can finally do something with this Buck money, worthwhile. I don't know exactly, because of course we never let it get off the ground. And I said to her, "Now, here's what you're going to do with this land. I'll tell you exactly what. There are three ranches." And I told them exactly what was going to happen. And she was furious. And of course that's just what happened. And I said, "You can't snap your fingers and all of the sudden the county says, 'oh, good idea, Rhoda.'" And she says, "Well, don't call me Rhoda." I says, "Well, whatever you want I'll call you, but the answer's no. We're not doing it. We're not going to even think about it. We won't even accept an application for doing this." And that probably I would say without a doubt that evening set the stage for them going well screw Marin County. And it was about a year later when they filed the suit, but I think that they probably really hated us, individually, the supervisors. It was a very ugly evening. And Barbara Boxer was there and she ran out. She said, "I can't take this," because, I mean there was really, really screaming and yelling and I mean Peter Behr was there and he was on the foundation board and he was on our side. I mean, he wasn't going to allow anything like that out there. And she silenced him. And he also voted against breaking the will. And they didn't pay attention to him.

MG: Were all the supervisors in Marin in unanimous against this idea?

GG: Oh, yeah. Everybody. Everyone. The five of us. Yeah. They had no support.

MG: So after they gave up the court case, what were the early days of Marin Community Foundation like?

GG: Well, let me explain what happened. So we went – So the judge took me and brought Doug Maloney and I in his chambers and said, “Okay, now, go create a foundation.” What he – He threw them out and going to create a new entity, the Marin Community Foundation, and he said, “Go create one,” and he said, “I really want you to be creative. Do something.” He said most of these foundations are done by the appointed authority of some federal circuit judges or something nobody knows. He said I want you guys to be really creative and do something interesting.

So we went to Doug’s house, got drunk, got the will, and went through the will and took out little phrases like there’s a poor needy thing, there was a religious thing, whatever they were, we made a category, and that would – And that entity was entitled to an appointment. That’s how we came up with the designation of who the trustees would be. Then, as I always said, to the victor goes the spoils, and we won, we’re the supervisors, and we wanted to make sure no bad things ever happened. We gave ourselves two seats, gave the supers two seats. So that’s how we – We created that one and went back to the judge. Judge said, “This is interesting,” said, “Looks like there’ll be a lot of community involvement.” And there is. There is. I just had to go off because of eight years, serving eight years.

Thirty-seven people applied to take my place. So, I mean, there is a lot of interest in it. In any event, and then he said I’m going to reassess the case. And then he created the Marin Community Foundation as we gave it to him. And then he recessed for one year. And in the year he invited people to come and apply for the major projects that he was going to choose to what the decision was will take 20 – his decision was he’ll take 20 percent of the money and give it to an entity or entities that do things that benefit all mankind, all humankind. So for a year, people ran around and developed applications and there were 41 applications that came in to him a year later.

And out of that, he chose the Buck Institute for Research in Aging and got 15 percent. It got three-quarters of the money, forever. Forever. Three-quarters of the 20 percent. And that gave it really good leverage, because that’s guaranteed, and that helps them get federal grants from NIH, etc. And then he split the other 5 percent between two others – one education and one drug and alcohol. One gets 2.5 percent, one gets 2.5 percent, something like that, and those were the three that he created, and that was so nobody could successfully file a suit in saying you’re not – you’re just benefiting little selfish Marin. No, actually, no, we’re not.

Like the Buck Center for Research in Aging now has a staff of about 220 people. It’s going to 640. And if you go there, you’ll think you’re at the United Nations. There are doctors there from every country on the globe. And because it’s the only freestanding institution in the world who focuses only on issues of aging. Do you see? It doesn’t – It’s not in competition with a football team, you know, like happens at universities or with popular diseases like AIDS or whatever. It has to do just research for aging. So scientists all over the world who want to do that flock here. And it’s a huge success.

MG: When you said that statement at the Commonwealth Club about aging, you just kind of – it just kind of came to you, I guess. What was the process of that once it became got this 15 percent or the 20 percent that it actually turned into the institute that it is? How was the planning, the –

GG: A woman who just graduated from here, named Mary McEckran, she had tried the case. She was the lawyer in the case on our side representing Doc Cook, who drew the will, she was representing him. So because Doc Cook loved this idea, she then spent the next year creating the Buck Institute for Research in Aging. I mean, in other words, the application that went to the judge, like this, the whole what is now, the Buck Institute for Aging, is she created that. And the judge approved the whole thing, and that's what it is, and she now runs it. I mean she's – so that's how it was fleshed out. First, it was just a concept, and now it's on the ground, it's going great, huge, wonderful.

MG: How do you – how was the decision to have world famous architect – can't remember his first name – Pai – Mario – Mario Pai?

GG: I.M. Pei.

MG: I.M. Pei.

GG: He did the Louvre. Well, it was really the decision of Doug Maloney, who was one of the first board members, and Mary McEckran, and they wanted to do something really – make us a great statement. So they got Pei.

MG: Beautiful building.

GG: Have you been there?

MG: Yes.

GG: Yeah, it's stunning. You gone on tours and stuff?

MG: Yes, I have.

GG: Okay. Because I'll set up anything you want. I think I'm going to go there now. I mean I think I'll go on that board now. I have to leave. You know I said that. Leave Marin Community Foundation. You can't be on both, because they're interlocked.

MG: What was your experience like on the Marin Community Foundation board?

GG: It was fine. I mean I was there eight years and when I went there, I sat on my first day, and they were then doing – making about 300-400 grants a year to a lot of non-profits, and I said, look, I just want to tell you something. I think you're frittering away this money. I think you should do – if I had it to do, I'd do four things instead of 400. And make big impacts on the planet and on Marin rather than funding some

administrative assistant and some non-profit that you never see the money – Well, that was what I worked on for a long time, and that was what we did. Now, believe me, when I say things like that, when you're one person on a board, whether it's a board of supervisors or the MCF, you don't do things alone.

I mean I could have all those ideas in the world, but if the board majority didn't agree, wouldn't happen. So now what they've done is they've chosen – they did a strategic plan and they chose four arenas to function in, big time. So, for example, one of them is affordable housing, and so we used to fund a lot of entities that work on affordable housing, and pay for their executive director, something like that, pay – Now we spend \$10 million to build affordable housing, okay? So, what I mean is we now focus and move in and in a big way. So we're doing early childhood education and we're doing senior facilities and things like that. Anyway, I'm all – So when you say how was it, it was great.

And I'm not – And it's also fine to go, you know what I mean? I had a lot of mixed feelings about the concept of term limits just in general. I think they're terrible in the state legislature. I mean I just think they ruin it. But I think on something like this it's healthy, you know what I mean? You get too engrained in these things and they become – you think you're it, you know what I mean? So I welcome going on it, and it was a lot of ironies. I created it and then I was on the board. I mean I created it 30 years ago, whatever, and then I was on it – and then on the board it was really that was really fascinating to me.

MG: Do they have a certain amount of money they have to give away every year? Is there like a percentage of the interest that they earn, or –

GG: Actually, it's more the opposite. The court has limited how much they can give away. The reason is they want to keep it in perpetuity, right? So you can't get run around and say, oh, we're going to spend \$100 million. So the court says you can spend 5 percent of the corpus a year. That's what you can do, 5 percent. And they have a leveling thing because sometimes when the market goes up and down you know about that, so it levels, it's always like 5 percent. So and that's so that it always has keeps it corpus, and the corpus grows, so that it can exist in perpetuity. So it's a cap more than anything else. There are many people who say, why don't you just – like now, when things are bad at the county, there are many people who think the foundation should invade the corpus, invade the corpus and take \$100 million and save the county programs that are in trouble from the state cuts. So there's always people like that.

MG: But do they always give that 5 percent, or do they sometimes only give 2 percent?

GG: Oh, no, no, we always give.

MG: Always give what you can? Just wondering.

GG: We spend to the max.

MG: So one of the things that came out of, I think, the Marin Community Foundation funds, more recently, was the gym out at San Geronimo Valley. Can you talk about that a little bit?

GG: That was a big thing to me because it was right in my backyard. So I loved that. We did a lot of those. We think we, the foundation, think that's one of the best investments that we can do, because it's – If they're built right, they're good for at least 50 years, maybe 100, for kid to thrive in. And that's way better than, say, paying for the staff to run the gym, you know what I mean? So I think we've done about 12 of these, but that one I liked a lot because it was right by me, so the fact my grandkids are going there. I mean playing there, playing ball.

MG: 12 of these meaning like structural buildings?

GG: Yeah, around the county. There's one very like it we did in Point Reyes some time ago, and then we've done – We do those and community centers all over the – But probably maybe we've done 20, but we're very big on capital programs like that. Now, we never do the whole thing. For example, that cost \$5 million. That gym and youth center, we paid \$1 million. We put in \$1 million. First \$500,000 and later we capped it with another \$500,000, if I remember the breakdown right. That's about what we do. We never – If there's not – We like to leverage. So we're not going to go build somebody a gym, but we'll help them if it puts it over the top.

MG: At one point in your career, when you were a supervisor, you changed from being a Republican to a Democrat. Can you talk a little bit about that time and why you did that?

GG: I can't remember the specifics now, because I can't believe I was ever Republican, now, given what the party's become. See, in those days, all the Marin County people, elected people, were Republicans. The whole board, Republicans, Peter Behr was Republican, Bill Bower was the assemblyman. But it was a different kind of Republican than we have today. They were very progressive, if not liberal. But as the years were going on, it went way, way to the right. Now, it's gone over a cliff. But that's what did it. I forget the exact thing. I think it was something about a war. Probably was something to do with war that was the last straw for me, but I really forget the specifics, which is funny.

But it was just like I wasn't at home anymore in the party. I had no friends, no people that I thought alike, or they liked me. And no colleagues, no home there. I did that a long time ago. I want to say 20 years ago or so. I should know, but I don't. It's a way long time ago.

MG: Yes. 1989. Yeah.

GG: About. Yeah. That's 20.

MG: Some of the people that you did work with over the years, like Peter Behr, can you talk a little bit about him?

GG: Well, Peter Behr was a prince, and he's out of that old breed of Republicans, like in the congress, like Pete McClousky was one for this, the San Mateo congressman, and Peter Behr did everything. I mean he was on the city council, board of supervisors and then the state senate and he did Wild Rivers there, etc. He was a true protector of the planet and a really wonderful, wonderful human being. And he was a very important mentor to me because he – One time I was going to run for the state legislature against a guy named Bill Fulani, and I announced that. Peter Behr came running over, went, took me to lunch, and said, no, don't do this, don't do this. He said this is not higher office, it's further office, it's further from relevancy, it's further from your ability to make a difference.

And he said, "Gary, look, down here, on a three to two vote, you've saved West Marin. You can do that all the time here but you can't do it in the legislature." And he said when he looked back on his career in the state senate, he said it's like walking down the beach. For a while you have your footprints in the sand, and then you turn around, the waves take them away. That's what it's like being in the legislature. You leave no permanent footprints. I mean, I'll never forget that. It's not higher office, it's further office – further from relevancy and further from the people, etc. I had a campaign.

I mean Margie had campaign offices and we were running around. And I stopped. I mean I stopped the whole thing. It's not happened many times in my life where somebody says something and I was probably receptive to it, if you know what I mean. You probably – I don't think one changes your life because somebody – but that had a huge impact on me. And ever since then I never then had any ambitions to go anywhere. I mean I always thought it was terrible to go to Sacramento or Washington, that you were totally irrelevant. And in my career, both at the board and now here, I do a lot of stuff. I always have done. I was the board's guy to go to Washington and Sacramento and all that and work out deals for money and bills and stuff for the Golden Gate Bridge to buy busses or ferryboats or whatever. And that – and I see this place – both Sacramento and Washington and it's just despicable. I can't wait to get the hell out of there. It's sick.

MG: Because?

GG: Well, the extreme polarization and the furor in which they function. There's no humanity left. They're only out for their own egomaniacal course, which I can't figure out, because they're despised. They have an 8-9 percent favorable rating in the Congress of the United States. Who wants to do that? Anyway, it's just terrible. There's no there, there. There's no collegiality. There's no attempt to get things done. It's rather to take advantage of the other side, so to speak. And both parties are doing it all the time.

MG: Did you see that when you were a supervisor going to Washington, or has it changed?

GG: No, it's changed a lot. Like in those days, the Burtons did things. They got things done, and they did it bipartisan. I mean all the park stuff that Phil Burton did had – He'd have 410 votes and stuff in the congress. Of course, very bipartisan. That's why I say you couldn't do that today. All the Republicans would vote no.

MG: What about Margaret Azevedo? In terms of –

GG: Oh, she was divine and she was a really good planning commissioner. Would have been a great supervisor, too, county supervisor, always wanted her. She ran but didn't win. But she was very, very wise. And she balanced things between the environment and housing, affordable housing, etc.. She was one of the few really heavy environmentalists who did that, who talked about both the human and the planet needs. Lot of courage, lot of courage, lot of times she'd go against the popular view, and or her colleagues. Lot of times, vote in the planning commission would be six to one, with Margaret alone, and I always thought she was one of the most courageous political people I knew in the county. Really great.

MG: Talking about human needs in the environment, what's your thoughts about the Drake Oyster Bay controversy and how some people think the bay should be totally wilderness, without any kind of human intervention?

GG: No, I'm on the other side of that. I think it's a fine use, to just want to make sure that it's clean. Years ago, it was run by a really nefarious operator who should have been jailed. I mean he was polluting all over the place, and that's not good, but the present operator is good and you should always insist on that. But to obliterate it as a potential existence in the park is a shame. And it was never the intentions of any of the authors of it, whether it was John Burton or the county board of supervisors at the time. State legislature. All of it. None of us intended that the Wilderness Act, the wilderness designation, would exterminate that oyster farm – none of us. And I'm sorry to see it getting tortured out of existence, and it will be.

MG: You think?

GG: Yeah. It will be. Because the park purists are going to win this, eventually, and I think it's sad, personally.

MG: Why do you think that they're going to win?

GG: Well, it reminds me of when I was fighting to put all the ranches in the park and expand the park and everything. I remember one day the chief of staff of the senate interior committee said to me, I enjoy you, I enjoy what you're trying to do and everything, and he said, but I'm going to tell you something, and I said, what, he said, you're going to see the day when all this is taken away, and I said why, and he said, it won't last. He said, look, the park service and its constituents are pure park people. And he said, I want you to understand some – don't take offense, but he said, they're just

using you now. I said, what? He said, these lands would never be put in the park without your acquiescence. He meant by that the county board of supervisors.

The congress would not go and create and expand parks against local objection. And he said, so you guys say you want the ranches to stay, and they say, great, and he said, but I tell you, what they'll do is, as life goes on, they'll say, oh, there's too many cows, or there's this and that, and they'll slowly but surely refuse to renew the leases. And I'm seeing that happen today. They'll use any excuse they can to say, well, actually, you got to move along. You know? And so the oyster thing is just another one of those. And you have a whole coterie of people that want that, want that, want that, want that to happen. Do you understand? And it's a point of view. I mean, I think it's a legitimate point of view. I feel sort of that I made some mistakes there. If I had it to do again, I wouldn't have put all those ag lands in the park. I would have put the lands that were environmentally sensitive and stuff and left the ranches alone.

MG: Have there been ranchers who have been forced to leave?

GG: Yeah, most of them. Yeah. Almost all. They're slowly but surely exterminating the ranches in the park and they do it carefully and slowly and that's what that guy said. He said, by the way, they're around forever, you understand? You're going to die one day. Because I said, I'll never stand for it. And he said, no, that's fine, but they won't do it while you're around. And he said, they either won't do it when you're in power or they won't do it when you're alive, but over time, what will happen is that will all become pure park.

MG: They do it very quietly because – yeah.

GG: Yeah, and sometimes – and they got a lot of patience. They got a lot of patience because what happened – ranch is a really rough way of life. If they waited out, a lot of times the ranches go on their own, they have kids, the kids go to the city, and they experience, and they say what am I going to milk a cow for 12 hours for, you know what I mean? So there's less and less of an appetite for it as the generations go on. So a lot of times, I mean what the park would say if you went and interviewed and say Giacomini says you're kicking these guys out or something, they'd say, no, no, they're willing, they're ready to go, they're willing to have their – you see? So it's some of that happens, I mean a lot of it, and they take advantage of that. Now, the ranchers would say that they get squeezed out and it's not worth fighting the regulations over time, you see what I mean? No, no, you can only have ten cows per acre, now five, now four, and I guess after a while it's not – to them, it's not worth the – You see what I mean? So they have a whole different view of it than the park does, but the park – By the way you don't, very rarely ready about this stuff. Now and then you get a feisty rancher, but it's usually lost in the shuffle because the park will say, yeah, well, they were overgrazing, so you know what I mean? So nobody wants a park to be overgrazed. So I know it. I know all these ranches. I know who the good guys are and the bad guys are. And there are guys that need to be stepped on, do you know what I mean? They do need to shape up. And there are others that are just real straight people that care about – they're good stewards of the

land as the park is, you know? And but the purism is bothersome to me, and it comes out of the park. To another way it comes out is like there are all those exotic deer that were there. Yeah. Many, many – oh, in the '30s, a guy named Onger I think was his name, brought these really exotic deer there, and they used to – and they let them go, and they'd go hunt them.

Okay, but as years went on, the deer multiplied like rabbits, and they're everywhere, and they're beautiful. I don't know if you ever saw them, but they're white deer with great antlers and then this deer and everything and they were just fine, they were all fine. Park guys go they're not native and we're going to go kill them all. And they did it in the worst way. Like when they started to make that decision, a lot of the ranchers there said, well, if you want to do that, why don't you send them over our way? We'll be glad to have them. Move some over on these ranches. They can be on our ranch and then we'll hunt them now and then but we'll be glad to have them. No, no, no.

And they have this mentality sort of like – And the park purists are sort of like let the rangers do it, like they just die this nice death, kind of the ranchers are murdering them, well, the park guys, of course, they hire hunters. They hire hunters to go in there and they massacred them. I mean it was terrible. Oh my god all these ranchers were calling me saying you can't believe the slaughter they do, and the deer running around screaming and they're wounded. So it wasn't pretty at all. And they go, we got them, all that. Well, what's the point of that? But that's just another example of that, see? That's pure because they weren't here 200 years ago, so neither were we.

MG: You were saying that you thought that you would rather not have included the agricultural land in the park. Are there other things, thinking back on your career, more or less major things, that you think you would rather not have done or should have done a different way?

GG: Well, there's one. There's a ghost that haunts me from time to time, but I would – in answer to your question, would I have done it differently, no, I guess not – but this – all this zoning we did, A60, etc., and we swept across the county, and changed the development build out from 1.1 million to 3,000, so I paint – and earlier, when we were talking, I paint that in real glowing terms, right? We saved the place. That's fine. But there were collateral effects to that. And there isn't any doubt at all about what we did. Again, it's supply and demand and the reverse. It's one of the big reasons Marin is so expensive. We don't – There's hardly any place for the kids to grow up and live here.

Almost all of our kids have to move out of the county. The seniors can't afford to stay here. So one of the unintended consequences of all that – having open space and agriculture zoning – has been to really roll run up the prices and values. Do you know what I mean? Now, people have said, so, would you, if you had to do it over again, would you not have done it? And I think, well, no, this is – I always thought of the county and the Bay Area sort of like the lungs of the Bay Area. It's a very special place. It's enjoyed by a lot of people. All these parks are not just visited by the people of Marin, you know? So I sort of think, well, no, actually, no, I would have done the same

thing, but I wouldn't be so haughty about it all. I mean we do – there's no doubt at all that that does result in it much harder for people to – just average folks to be able to make it here, you know what I mean?

And, as I said, I thought it through lots of ways, and I watched the kids – all my friends – friends of my kids and grandkids, all that. None of them move. They move, they move. They move to Petaluma, Sonoma, stuff like that, and that's too bad, to have the vitality drained off that way. And, accordingly, the county is getting gentrified really seriously, right? We're the most gentrified in the state and we're going to get more and more so. The grand jury did a report called the Tsunami of Aging or something that's coming and it was just stunning. There's going to be like 70 percent of us over 60 in not so long – by 2020.

MG: Well, aging is one thing. Gentrification is a different thing.

GG: Yeah, but sometimes they go hand in hand, though.

MG: Some of the seniors, as you were saying, who can't afford to live here, do have to go. And anyway, I have seen the changes that you're talking about and –

GG: So I'm just saying, now and then I think, hmm, maybe we should have – say, when we did the zoning, for example, we did it with a big, broad brush. And we were heroes. We paint everything green. We're going to zone it. Well, really, a lot of that land wasn't good ag lands, we just did it because we could, you know what I mean? And I think that's one thing in hindsight I would have been more careful.

MG: But would it be better if they had tract homes and –

GG: We could have some, we could have had some development –

MG: Transportation issues or –

GG: -on the margins. But again, it's done, and in the main, I sort it out like, well, that's all right.

MG: So what made you decide to stop running for supervisor? Stop being a supervisor?

GG: It's just an extension of been there, done that. 24 years. I mean I always wanted to do this – one day at a board meeting – is just as people came up to the podium, say, "Stop, I'm going to say what you're going to say, and if I leave anything out, tell me, and I know that I could have done that, right?" Then you shouldn't be there anymore. In other words, I knew everything. And by the way, then you think you know everything, in a different way, not only do I know what you're going to say, but I know what the outcome should be, and I found that, one, so I was getting bored with that, and the other was I was getting to be snotty.

Like, people would come up with an idea, and they were maybe relatively young or naïve to the political thing, and they come to the board, and I go, “You idiot, in ’82 we did this, and this is what happened in Sonoma. No, we’re not going to do it.” And then I didn’t like myself getting like that, you know what I mean? You get to be a know it all, and you don’t know it all, you know what I mean? So I started to look in the mirror and say, wait a minute, wait a minute, you been there, done that, you’re not the Duke of Earl, you don’t have to stay here for eternity.

MG: So what did you think about doing?

GG: This. So I was there, and then started to make noises that I was going to retire, this law firm, this law firm has a – came to me and said, well, we’d love to offer you a job, and I said, “Well, actually, no, I don’t think so.” The reason they did is they were the attorneys, and still are, for a lot of the boards I was on. Like I was on the bridge [board] for 20 years and the president, and all that, they’re the lawyers for it. So over time I got to know a lot of these lawyers, so they want – So I said “No, but I’ll tell you what I would do. I don’t want to commute. I never, and I not going to start now, so you let me open a place in Marin, and I’ll get you a lot of business, and you can send over other real lawyers to do it, and I’ll get business, and I’ll do that.” So we got this place. But it was little, a fraction of this place. Few offices. I mean just a few.

MG: Starting out?

GG: They gave me one year. The firm gave me one year and I made \$3 million or \$4 million my first year. Ha. So then they – I mean I got that money but I mean – So they thought this is very good idea. So that was – That’s what I did. I sort of made my own conditions. And I feel – This is a small little place. I have eight to ten, somebody has twelve and then they could only come over and do specialty stuff, so the – And so I’ve got a huge – It’s 200 lawyers, so I could – I’ve got a huge array of people I can turn to for anything, you know what I mean?

MG: And what kind of law are you doing here?

GG: I do – What I do is I do entitlement work. Like I do all of George Lucas’s stuff, for example. If he wants to do – He’s doing a project, I go get – I really know how to have supervisors say yes, or I can find out. I mean, what I do is I go to these supervisors, wherever they are, I don’t care what city or county or anything else, and say, “What do you need to say yes? Here’s what my people have in mind. Is that good or bad?” And sometimes – I always say to these decision-makers, “There is no bad answer. You can tell me no, no, never, and I’ll say fine, because I’ll save my guys a lot of money, because they won’t miss a lot of money, but if it’s doable, tell me on what” – know what I mean? So I go right up to the very top, to the decision-makers, find out if it’s okay, and then if it is, I have the people buy the land, or whatever it is, and go forward, and I say, in the end, you’ll be fine. You got to go through two or three years of bureaucracy, but you’ll get there.

MG: Do they have any – what you call it – guarantee? Like, when you say, okay, go ahead, it looks like it's fine –

GG: Well, I think they – I think I've got a pretty good reputation of if I say something's going to happen, it does. That gets around. It gets around. And I'm very careful about that. I mean if it's dicey, I say, it's dicey, and if it's no-go – I had a guy the other night, some cocktail party, comes, shakes me hand, he said, "You saved me \$25 million by telling me no." And the guy was going to buy something because some guy at the San Rafael planning department said, "Oh, you can build 400 apartments or something and we're going to buy it, closing the deal, and they came here for us to work on the papers," and I said, "You're not going to get 40." What? And I said, no, that's just a planner who thinks. So they stopped, got out of the deal. So sometimes, just to be able to say – find out what the lay of the land is – is a great service, you know? Like we didn't do that. My own criteria is I never do something for a client I wouldn't have voted for. Do you see what I mean? So if somebody wants to go wreck A60 or something, they're not going to get me to do it. You see what I mean?

MG: What is entitlement work?

GG: Well, so somebody wants to build a project, right? Like St. Vincent's wanted to build facilities for 1,000 seniors. George Lucas wants to build post-film production facilities on his lands. So that – They want to do something, want to build something, somebody wants to build a shopping center or something, or somebody wants – anything you can imagine – somebody wants to build a house. That's – And to get the permits and the approvals is the entitlement. That's what it is.

MG: You're entitled to build because they have these permits? So what has been the most challenging case or client that you've had since you've been working here?

GG: Many of them are challenging because their expectations are too high, but and I think I probably fire more clients than I keep because of that. I mean I don't – I'm not very – I don't suffer fools very long or very gladly. And especially now that I'm in this position, I don't. Don't want to do it my way, I'm not going to do it. So now, I don't know, I'm actually – if I even could think of it, I probably wouldn't tell you, because I'd be in big trouble with a lot of the clients that I have, most trouble with ongoing. So I think I'm not going to serve them up on a platter. It's those clients who think that they're above any law, if you know what I mean, and think that they're entitled to whatever they want. Those are the worst kind of clients. You see? "Do you know who I am? Do you know how much money I have?" So that's the worst, worst, because they bring a whole attitude toward it which is designed to cause them to be defeated, if you know what I mean, just the attitude. So I sort of have a lot of fun trying to – varying degrees of success to shape people up and if they don't I say here's some other lawyers to go see.

MG: You were saying that you think that the people here in Marin now don't have much of an appetite more for spending more on open space. How does that affect, would you say, the Silvera property and the plans that the developer had for that?

GG: That doesn't affect them, those plans and all to build a senior facility, because the plans were – And the reason it hasn't been done, by the way, is because I got them all the necessary entitlements. What happened is they can't get any financing. Nobody can get – none of my clients except for some high end clients like George Lucas, nobody can get any – he don't need financing. He is his own finance. But average midsize builders and stuff, people that build senior facilities or – They can't get financing. So I mean I have all kinds of projects that I've – I got a project approved here, a Marin Loch Lomand, you know?

100 houses, redo all the burst and everything, and it got approved. They can't get any financing. So that's just really – that's out there at Saint Vincent's, what's happened is that the area for development had gotten – is so constrained by the different actions the supervisors took, that 90 percent of it is going to be open space anyway, without anybody paying a penny, do you see? So that comes about during the development process. Do you see what I mean? So it doesn't matter. That doesn't need Open Space money. It's going to happen as a result of the development project, if ever.

MG: If they ever get financing? Is there anything that you would like to add to what we've talked about? Or, Laurie, do you have any questions?

LT: I sort of wonder what you think – some of the open space issues that you discussed, you talked about how things changed dramatically with Proposition 13. So I'm just curious whether you think that Proposition 13 is a positive thing, or what do you see in the future, as far as that goes? Will it always be with us?

GG: It looks like it always will be. The sad thing about it is, see, it was very good and I think necessary for homeowners. They were really in trouble. But it applies to commercial properties as well. So what's happened as a result of it is – before Prop 13 the commercial – let me tell you, the phenomenon happens – say you own Northgate Shopping Center, okay? You never sell that. See, that's what triggers the reassessment. You sell the stock. Therefore that tax will always be low, always. Just because of the way that you do transfers for – corporations do transfers. So over the years, instead of the commercial side paying about 50 percent property tax, they now pay about 12. That's just – and they're just frozen in place, do you see? Because commercial properties don't turn over in the normal way. Some do, but oh my god, it's just totally – so the burden really although it's way less, the property tax burden is way less on homeowners, because the taxes went down 54 percent. Still, the percent that homeowners carry is over 80 percent. Now, the trouble is, when you go – And so now and then people have tried to do that, do what's called a split role, put that on the ballot, and then you would tax commercial on what it's worth now – not on some artificial value about when you bought it or something.

And the public was crazy. They defeated them all over. Because the opponents of change on that say this is just the first step. They're coming for your houses next. If you had a chink in the armor – Prop 13, they'll get you. And it's so sad to me that that ploy

works, you see? Because it would be very healthy to have commercial be on a different tax role. Then you'd get – Look, in my time, when I was first on the board, the country was in the top of almost everything, and the state, first in education, right? You know we're now like 48th in about every measurable standard, whether it's fixing roads or dollars behind kids, right? We don't have enough revenue in this state.

LT: And you blame that mostly on Proposition 13?

GG: I do. And then now, now, you really, really have an ugly electorate. And some of which itself is – I totally understand. People are hurting. A lot of people are out of work. A lot of people are losing their houses to foreclosure. A lot of people are under water. You can get two-thirds for – and I don't mean just open space. They're not going to vote for anything. Imagine saying, well, state comes back, says, we need some money, we need to help out with some welfare here. Imagine what people would do with that, put that on a ballot, right? Hell, even stuff that's so critically necessary like homecare for seniors, things like that. They're not going to vote for – Here's what the electorate now is doing in California. I mean it just makes you so sad. And here, too. They only vote for things that affect them directly. So if you have kids in school, you vote for the school tax, okay? You don't, you don't. And that's why schools are very smart and they put things on quiet ballots, you know what I mean? They're very careful about putting things on like a mail-in ballot or something and they just work on their students, on their constituents, who they know, and they do pretty well. But if you put it on a general, a June ballot or November ballot, it'll all get killed. Anyway, right now, people, so they look at something like, I don't need that, doesn't benefit me. And it's a selfish thing.

All in my – when I was young, that was sort of the common wheely-dip. I mean people gladly paid property taxes to go to schools even if their kids weren't – they didn't have kids or the kids were in private school. That was just part of the things you did. That was what you do, you know? I don't see any of that in today's modern electorate, and I see a selfishness, some of which I understand, but the results are horrible. We're spiraling down and down and down as a state, and when the state gets in trouble, the counties get pneumonia.

LT: So with the Open Space, doesn't that seem like something you would benefit from directly? I mean –

GG: No.

LT: Say the area behind your house could be open space and you could –

GG: But they don't think that. Yeah, if they thought that. If you have a very narrow open space issue, it goes to a community, and it's going to, like you're saying, preserve their backyard, they'll vote for it, but general, county-wide elections, they don't see the value in it for them right now. Believe me, they've polled this like hell, and the county has polled, and they would be killed. They get 35 percent favorable voters or something and they need 67.

MG: When you were on the Open Space board, because I think supervisors were on the board, what were some of the big purchases that you were involved with for Open Space in Marin?

GG: Like San Marin, all that, what do you call that? That's not what the Open Space thing is called, but that – where that subdivision is, that was a big purchase.

MG: Mount Burdell area?

GG: Yeah.

MG: Burdell?

GG: That was probably 1,500 acres or something like that. So I mean that's the one that leaps out at me as a big one. We did all kinds of real important ones, and that's all around here and there. Wonder how much they have now. Maybe 12,000 acres total, something like that. Do you know that?

LT: Well, we just did an interview with David Hansen who was – it's something like that. But he also – One of the things that really struck me was that he mentioned – I mean the percentage of open space that was saved before Proposition 13, it was like 95 percent of all the open space, and since then it's just a fraction of that in the past 40 years.

GG: That's why I say the big thing now is to get this 22 acres in Morrison. That's their goal for the next five years. In our day, that would just be a pittance, could have done that on the consent calendar, know what I mean? Because we had money all over the place.

MG: Given the way the economy is and how what you've been talking about in terms of the community interest in taxes and so forth, where do you see this going for Marin?

GG: Actually, always, no matter what happens, Marin is in better shape than almost anybody else, relatively. We're wealthy. But I, as a society, I'll be damned if I know where we're going to go. I've never seen anything so bad as the Washington scene and Sacramento. They're both governments are totally dysfunctional. Absolutely, totally dysfunctional. And I don't see a way out. And in California, term limits has had a lot to do with that. But there's no term limits in Washington, so that's not an excuse. I've just never been so sort of despondent. Never so selfishly glad that I did what I did when I did it. I would hate to be any of these people in office today. Because whatever they do, they're going to be – One of the reasons – You know, Al Boro, the mayor of San Rafael – he was for years. We were talking. He was deciding whether to retire or not, which he did, just now, just recently. We were in Sonoma, his favorite little hideaway. We were talking about it and I said, you know, Al, if I were you, I would leave. You got an illustrious career. And I said, in the future, everybody's going to hate you, because you're going to have to dismantle everything you created in San Rafael. You're going to

get eaten up by the pension. They're going to take away – He said it's come to be where you're paying pension to these firemen and policemen and laying off policemen and firemen. And then the state cuts and everything else. I said, "Al, I know so many things that you've done that you're so proud of and layer by layer it's going to be like pulling your fingers off. And I said they're not going to say, 'Well, he's a good guy, he created that' – they're only worried about right now. When you took away their whatever." And he said, "God, that's a really good point." He said – I said it's like being on the school board today. Nobody say, "Hey, good job," right, because you only got rid of five teachers instead of seven. I mean there's no good times on these boards these days. So I know. I know I'm sounding – I am very grim about the future and I don't know what's going to shake our way out of it.

I had huge hopes in Obama and I don't anymore. I mean I hope he's re-elected because the other ones are such idiots. But he never delivered the hope and everything that I had. Well, I had a whole bunch. I thought we'd get out of the wars and a whole bunch of stuff like right away. But if he can't deliver, I don't know who can. I feel the same about Jerry Brown. I thought if there's one person that can get up there and do it, he can, and he couldn't, and he found out, to his horror – we have a – one of our partners, a guy named Doug Bosco, he was in Congress for a long time in the north coast – He's Jerry Brown's best man and you've never – You probably have followed how the state – Jerry Brown was – to get some Republicans to help vote to put a tax thing on – and then after a while he dropped that. He dropped pushing that. Now, the reason is because they took internal polls and found out that it'll lose anyway. And his poll showed the electorate would vote no on all the things that he was pushing. So then he thought, "Oh my God, that's all I need." You go put this on the ballot, people say no, right? That's how grim it is. Because I thought what he had going was really good.

MG: What do you think about the SMART train?

GG: I think it's going to be a debacle. I think there's no there, there. I think it's like a little train to nowhere. I think nobody's – I don't know. What I'm really furious about with that is that they knew going in that they had put on way less on the ballot than the money they needed, and I talked to all of them. They said, "Well, Gary, we're just going to pass it, then we'll come back to voters, put on another penny, and of course you couldn't go back now to those voters." So now they've had to cut the – Sonoma – If they could get it on the ballot again, they would vote it down so much, because we're not going where we said we would, right? But what I'm always worried about for that is that there's not the base to sustain a train, population. I mean, we just don't have that much. And every time they traffic gets okay, everybody flocks back to the – you know. I think it'd be like 20 riders when it – if and when it ever happens. I think that I'm afraid – and by the way, getting that far and I'm sure that's their best shot – but he can't make miracles, even though I think he's very, very, very good. But god, they're hundreds of millions short, right? And the people are mad.

LT: Do you think if it connected in with other transportation systems, though, it'd be different? If it was a smoother – You could get to San Francisco, and then you could get to that train.

GG: Maybe. Now –

LT: Link up with the high speed rail, if that happens.

GG: Maybe. Doesn't even come here. Doesn't even come to Larkspur. Stops in San Rafael. What good is that?

LT: Right on the other side of the freeway here, from you, I think, is where it will stop.

GG: No. No. They can only go to San Rafael, to downtown San Rafael. They're supposed to come here, but they don't have the money. So it just goes to San Rafael.

LT: I thought –

GG: No, what you want to do is have a connector to the ferry.

LT: Exactly.

GG: I mean that's what it's supposed to do.

LT: Right.

GG: Anyway, I've got a lot of friends that are big supporters of SMART and they're saying that it works, but I'm just answering you about my own view. I think it's not going to work.

MG: I read a couple places that when you retired you were interested in possibly starting a nursery.

GG: Yeah.

MG: Where does that thought come from?

GG: Well, I got a great old place in San Geronimo. 12 acres. It's wooded and it's – My favorite thing to do is to work in the gardens there. It's an old estate. And my wife and I can keep about 4 acres as against the wilderness. So I'd like to do that, and I'm big on certain kinds of flowers and etc., so I've kidded about – because we have a flat field down on Drake [Sir Francis Drake Boulevard], maybe 2 acres, Drake, right near the school, and it would – A lot of traffic goes by there and I've always thought you have a little nursery there and people stop. Now, I'm never going to do it, but that's what I thought I would do when I grew up.

MG: You mentioned an old estate. Do you know who had it before you?

GG: Oh, yeah. They're buried there.

MG: They're buried there?

GG: I bought it from Van Morrison. The rock singer. Thankfully for me he thought it was haunted. And sold it for a song. It's an old place on 12 acres. He thought there were ghosts all over the place. So he let it get all overgrown with blackberries and I came along and kids and I hacked it out and it's wonderful.

MG: Who were the original owners, do you know?

GG: Yeah. Mr. and Mrs. Law. And they built it from – It was a summer escape for them from San Francisco. And they built this. Had a maid's quarters and –

MG: Are the old buildings still there?

GG: Yeah. Everything's there.

MG: That sounds like a wonderful retreat.

GG: It is. It's a great compound. Now, on the property, live my whole family, both my sons and their wives and their kids are on the property. So I have those families of five grandkids all on the property. So we all run around and do projects together and stuff.

MG: That is wonderful.

GG: Oh yeah, it's great.

MG: That's something that's very, almost unheard of nowadays.

GG: I'm the luckiest guy that I know. I mean born and raised here in this great county and got to do this stuff that I was able to be involved in. I have paid people. People always say to me, how did you trade in \$100,000-plus at the time for \$13,000? I said I would have paid the county to be able to be supervisor at the time it was so wonderful. But I don't believe – I say it now.

MG: Well, I have to thank you, because I live up in Woodacre, and all that open space up there, a lot of it's due to you. So thank you for that.

GG: Well, me and others, as I say, no one supervisor does it, does all of it. But what you do have power – a supervisor has unique unilateral power to stop things. Never in my 24 years on the board, never did I say, in my district, on a planning matter, something's going to happen or not going to happen, where that didn't happen. Do you see? No one, no supervisors would ever have said, sorry, but I think this is a good

application, we're going to vote for it, right? Well, one, they know I would kill them, and so you have huge negative power, you know what I mean? Say no. And sometimes that's a lot of power.

MG: I also wanted to ask you about Peter Arrigoni. He was starting out in politics about the same time you were, wasn't he?

GG: Yeah, we were on the board together. We're still very good friends. We go to Europe every year together, us and our wives, and he's about 80. He's in fairly good shape. And he was on the board with me for – I only overlapped with him for four years. He, on the night I got elected, he beat Barbara Boxer. He beat Barbara Boxer and Bill Filante in the same night. Nobody's ever beaten either of them before. And Barbara's never been beaten since. Anyways, Peter's a great guy, and he was a big open space guy, and he stopped Highway 17. That was his big thing he ran for was a big eight lane freeway that goes through the Ross Valley and that's what he ran on, to stop that. So he's a good crusader.

MG: Sort of out to Point Reyes?

GG: Eventually, it would have, but he stopped it in the Ross Valley, and that was his battle that he led.

MG: Well, is there anything that you would like to add about any of the people or the events that we've talked about?

GG: No, I think I've bored you enough.

MG: Oh, no, it's been wonderful, thank you for your time.

LT: Thank you so much.

GG: Thank you both.

LT: Thank you.