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**JOHN JACOB RHODES, JR.**  
1916-2003

1993  
U.S. Congressman and C.A.P. Proponent



The following is an oral history interview with John J. Rhodes, Jr. (**JR**) conducted by Zona Davis Lorig (**ZL**) for Historical League, Inc. on November 30, 1992 at Mr. Rhode's home.

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.  
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park, Tempe, Arizona.*

**ZL:** Mr. Rhodes, first of all, I would like to offer congratulations on your selection as a 1993 Historymaker for the Historical Society.

**JR:** Thank you. I've been interested in the Historical Society for some time and this is a great honor and I appreciate it.

**ZL:** Would you please share when and where you were born and reared.

**JR:** I don't remember it, but I was born September 18, 1916. That's what my mother tells me, at least. I was born in Council Grove, Kansas at our home which was 613 West Main Street and the attending physician was Dr. B. E. Miller. He was my doctor practically all of my early life. My mother didn't have any live-in help at the time, but one of her nieces came up from Emporia and stayed with us during the first few weeks of my life. So she was sort of a nanny.

**ZL:** Women certainly needed that kind of help in those days.

**JR:** Oh they did, and we had a fairly good sized house and I have an older brother and an older sister. So I was sort of an afterthought, or no thought at all. It was good for Mother to have a little help.

**ZL:** You attended Kansas State University in Manhattan?

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**JR:** I did, yes.

**ZL:** You received a B.S. degree in 1938?

**JR:** Yes.

**ZL:** What was your major?

**JR:** Actually they called it Commerce. In those days, Kansas State was the Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science and they were not supposed to have a business administration school but they did. But you sort of had to put it together and the dean of general science was a very capable man whose name was Babcock. I told him early on that I wanted to be a lawyer. So he said, let's put a curriculum together for you so that you'll have both prelaw and business. So that's what he did and it worked out very well.

**ZL:** So you knew already that you wanted to be a lawyer and you applied to Harvard Law School?

**JR:** Yes, I shouldn't say I knew it, but I suspected that was where I would end up - as a lawyer. It is interesting because my mother had gone, as I said in those days, went East to school and she went to Emerson College in Boston. She had always said from time to time that she sort of wished that one of her children could go east to school. The Depression came along in the 30s and I had no desire, when I was about to graduate from Kansas State, to go out and fool around in that job market and get something that I really didn't want to do anyway. So when Mother said, "John, wouldn't you like to go to law school?" I said, "Yes, Mother, I would like to go." So I applied at Harvard and Yale and Michigan and the first one that I was selected by was Harvard, so that's where I went.

**ZL:** And you graduated from there in 1941?

**JR:** Yes, my class was 1941. I didn't get my degree until 1942 when I was in the service. It was a delayed sort of thing because I had had a rather serious illness my last year and actually was in a position where I was probably going to have to repeat a couple of courses that were required, but along came the war. I had a commission from ROTC at Kansas State and I was called to active duty in September of 1941. The Harvard law faculty had a meeting, probably in about April or May of '42, and decided that since I was a good boy and had some problems health-wise, they would go ahead and give me the degree without the necessity of repeating evidence, which was the course that I hadn't been able to get through.

**ZL:** Then you enlisted right away?

**JR:** I didn't enlist; I was called to duty. I was an officer and had a commission in the infantry actually. I



was greatly surprised when I was called to active duty in the Army Air Corps. The reason for that was very logical. Sometimes the Army isn't very logical but in this instance it was. The Air Corps was expanding so rapidly - this was just before our involvement in World War II - and they needed to release the pilots who were in administrative duties to train other pilots. There were 100 of us who were from the Kansas/Nebraska/Missouri area called to active duty in September of 1941. We were all sent to California, either to Mather Field in Sacramento, or Stockton Field, at Stockton. We were the cadre for two new bases, one at Victorville, California and one at Williams Air Force Base which was then called ACAFS#7, (Air Corps Advanced Flying School) Higley, Arizona.

**ZL:** You probably never heard of Higley, Arizona.

**JR:** No, I had not. Betty and I were engaged by then and so when I first reported to Mather Field, they started teaching in Spanish. You know the way rumors go around, the rumor was that we could be going to South America. So I was writing to Betty and I said, "They say we are either going to South America or Higley, Arizona." She wrote back and said, "I hope it's South America because I know where that is, but where is Higley, Arizona?"

**ZL:** What was Williams like at the time?

**JR:** It was nothing but open ditches and barracks that had never been lived in at all as it was just completed. Our group was a cadre. I think we had the cadre for five squadrons at 40 men each. So we had about 200 men who came down from Mather Field and reported to duty in early December. In fact, I had been there about three days when Pearl Harbor came along which was December 7<sup>th</sup>, of course. The BOQ's (Bachelor Officers' Quarters) were not completed so we had to live off the base. I had a room in the old El Portal Hotel in Mesa which was at the corner then of Main Street and Center. It's now the First Interstate Bank building. It was a Sunday morning and I was awakened by a radio which was in the next Room - the walls were sort of paper thin - and I was listening to this account of a bombing and then somebody said Pearl Harbor. I got up and dressed and rapped on the door. It was another officer whom I had met and I said, "Am I hearing this right?" He said, "Yeah, you sure are. There's been an attack on Pearl Harbor." He was dressed too and I said, "Don't you think, maybe we better go out to the Base." He said, "Yes, I was just on the way." So we went out there and of course, it was pandemonium. Everybody thought the next thing the Japanese would do would be to bomb the ACAFS #7, Higley, Arizona. They'd come right up the Gulf of California and bomb us, which of course is a little stupid, but that's the way people thought.

**ZL:** You don't know.

**JR:** You didn't know, had no way of knowing. So we immediately started looking for weapons, infantry type weapons and we borrowed some from the Arizona National Guard. Fort Huachuca had a pretty



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good-sized contingent. In fact, they had a whole division down there. They sent some troops out to help us guard our perimeter at that particular time and brought some rifles. We tried to teach these kids we had in the cadre who were just drafted. They could march in a way, but they knew very little about anything like that. The rifles we had were the old 1903 Springfield bolt action 30 calibers and so we tried to teach these kids how to fire without firing and we didn't have any dummy ammunition. All we had was live ammunition, so we tried teaching these kids how to load and lock a 1903 Springfield rifle without killing themselves. It was quite an experience. But we were able to do it and we finally were able to handle our own perimeter and post guards and that sort of thing.

**ZL:** At some point in this time, they sent some Chinese cadets over here. Now those were pilots?

**JR:** They were learning to fly. In fact, I think the first training class we had at Williams was in early 1942 and they were Chinese. Then, of course, soon after that we started getting American cadets, but the Chinese were our first and we were training them on old basic trainers, BT-13s, which was a pretty fair training airplane. Then when the Americans started to come, we also started getting all sorts of new troops in and built up the base because you had to take care of the cadets. So it really swung into action and was in pretty good running order by say the middle of 1942. My first job was a Squadron Adjutant. The commanding officer was Harold Hines who was from Lincoln, Nebraska and Harold and I became very good friends and still are as a matter of fact. But he was older than I, so he was commanding officer and I was second in command. Our date of rank was the same. We did things that were necessary to get the supplies and get the squadron going. About the third week, the commanding officer - he had an officer's call I think about every two or three days - said it's time for us to open the officer's mess. He looked at Leo Hill who was from Salina, Kansas. Leo and I had come to active duty together. And he looked at me and said, "Lt. Hill, Lt. Rhodes - Lt. Hill I want you to open the officer's club and Lt. Rhodes you're going to open the officer's mess." So all you can do is say, "Yes sir."

**ZL:** And panic inside.

**JR:** And panic, I should say. Harvard Law School didn't teach me how to do that. Leo knew more than I did. He was older. He'd been in business. So he said, "Well, the thing we have to do is to call the employment service and you're going to need some cooks and I'm going to need a bartender." So we did and lo and behold in a day or so we had a couple of cooks and a bartender and we were actually able to get the mess open in about three or four days after we were told to do it. That's the good news. The bad news is that the cooks were also on the sauce a lot, which is probably the reason they didn't have jobs, but they were pretty good cooks. We went through several before we got two that would stay around because going from Phoenix to Williams Field and back in those days was not all that easy.

**ZL:** No it wasn't. That was a fairly long trip.



**JR:** We didn't have any bus service until probably the middle of 1942.

**ZL:** Then they actually ran buses out there?

**JR:** Oh, yes. We had buses. They weren't very pretty, but they did run.

**ZL:** The Salt River Valley was really different when you arrived here.

**JR:** Indeed.

**ZL:** Would you give some of your first impressions?

**JR:** I drove down from Sacramento with the first sergeant. His name was Bush, incidentally, not related to George, but a good man. We arrived late in the afternoon, I think the third of December. We were going out Van Buren Street and somebody had given us directions as to how we might be able to get to Mesa, so we decided we just better stay in a motel. So we stayed in a motel on East Van Buren and the next day we went on out and found the Field. Phoenix was a pretty good-sized city. After all, I came from a town in Kansas with 2,300 people and so Phoenix looked like a real metropolis. Mesa was a beautiful little town. They claimed 17,000 people, but the old settlers tell me that they were lying a lot, it wasn't quite that much. The whole Valley was just charming as it could be, just sort of a resort area. Downtown Phoenix was a metropolitan center of some note and very nice. The people were friendly. They seemed to be glad to have us. Right away I fell in love with the place.

**ZL:** What did you think of the climate?

**JR:** This was in December and it rained a lot and there was no grass at the Field and it was a lot of open ditches. It was not all that delightful to begin with, but then came spring and then that really was delightful. I remember I would be officer of the day from time to time and that meant that you were up all night. The beauty of the dawn over the Superstitions was, I think, the thing that really caused me to feel that this might be God's country.

**ZL:** How were summers in those days?

**JR:** Just like they are today, exactly.

**ZL:** How did you cope with them?

**JR:** You just did. It was not easy, but we were air conditioned, swamp coolers. Betty and I were married in May of '42.



**ZL:** Back in Kansas?

**JR:** Yes, I flew back there and we were married and spent our honeymoon in the Hotel Muehlebach in Kansas City, Missouri. We drove my mother's car out there and I think we were there for two days and then drove it back and my brother drove us to Harrington and we caught a train, Southern Pacific. Actually it was Rock Island and then it connected with the Southern Pacific in Tucumcari. We came on out and lived in a motel in Mesa for about two weeks and about that time, Leo Hill, who was my old friend from Kansas. Actually it was Harold Hines. Harold Hines was the housing officer in addition to his other duties. The people of Chandler were building houses for the officers at Williams Air Force Base and they built 40 of them. I had not applied for one because I felt we probably couldn't afford it. We'll just get a room somewhere. Well, Harold Hines called me and said, "John, you need to have a house." "Well Harold, that's nice, but I haven't applied for it." He said, "You're talking to the housing officer." I said, "Fine. Do you have a house for me?" He said, "Yeah, as a matter of fact I do." So we moved in to 278 East Buffalo in Chandler in a brand new house. We were very poor. I had borrowed money for my last two years at Harvard and I needed to pay that back and I had bought a car on time, of course. So we had quite a situation and we went to Sears in Phoenix and the person who waited on us was Kay Baden. Kay has been a good friend through the years and now she has her own shop in the Biltmore Fashion Square. On time, we bought the rudiments of furniture - a sofa and a couple of chairs and a dining room table, etc. That's the way we started our married life.

**ZL:** After the war was over, you decided to remain in Arizona.

**JR:** We decided before the war was over really.

**ZL:** Betty must have liked it too.

**JR:** She did. We knew I was going to have to take the bar while I was still in uniform, (we started in 1944). Harvard Law School did not really care all that much about water law and mining and things like that so I had to learn that from books and things like that. There was no cram course because the law schools had been closed. Fortunately one of the civilian employees was a lady named Nadine Johnson. Her husband was Dick Johnson who was a lawyer in Mesa. I got to know Nadine because I was the first officer detailed to inventory the Post Exchange and she was in charge of the sundries department. She knew I graduated from law school and said one day, "Are you going to take the Arizona Bar?" I said, "Well, I hadn't thought of it. Maybe I will." She said, "Dick, my husband, has the notes from the cram course." I said, "Could I have them?" She said, "Of course." So I got Dick Johnson's notes and with that I was able to do enough cramming. So I took the bar in January '45 and passed that. When the war was over, I was ready to practice law somewhere and I finally decided to do it in Mesa and then one day of the week in Chandler, which turned out to be a fairly good thing to do.



Prior to that time, we had decided to register to vote. In fact, I had to have been a citizen of the state for a year to take the bar. This was in early 1944 that we went in to register to vote. The justice of the peace in Chandler was a fellow named Jesse Cheek. We went in and he said, "What can I do for you, Major?" I said, "Mr. Cheek, we want to register to vote." "Well fine." So he had this old LC Smith typewriter and he put the blanks in and we gave him our names, etc. and where we lived. He said, "You're registering as a Democrat?" I said, "No, we're registering as a Republican." He looked up and said, "Major, you look like a nice fellow. Now let me give you some advice. You're not going to amount to anything in this state as a Republican. I hope you'll change your mind and register as a Democrat." I said, "Mr. Cheek, I appreciate your advice, but there are probably some things that my father will turn over in his grave for, but this isn't going to be one of them." So he said, "I'm not sure that this typewriter will write Republican." We got to be great friends later on. I practiced law in Chandler and we used to kid each other about how he tried to get me to . . . After I went to Congress, he said, "I was wrong, wasn't I?" I said, "Well Jesse, you were doing your best."

**ZL:** After the war, Arizona began to attract some Republicans and they started running for offices and winning elections. Did you originally get involved with the Republican party thinking you would run for office?

**JR:** Not really, but I was interested in politics. My father was county chairman in Morris County, Kansas for years. So I grew up in the political climate. Later, he was state treasurer of Kansas. The former state treasurer got a little too ambitious financially and got in trouble and was convicted and went to prison. The governor was Alfred M. Landon who later, of course, was the Republican candidate for president. One day, Alf called my father and said, "Jake, (my father was a retail lumberman) I want to appoint you state treasurer." My dad said, "Alf, you must be mixed up. I'm just a lumberman. I don't know anything about being a state treasurer." He said, "Jake, you're honest and that's what I need." Actually, he appointed my father and then he ran twice and was elected. I helped him in his campaigns. I was in college by then, so that's how I got involved in politics.

**ZL:** So you really did have that background?

**JR:** Yes. My first few months practicing law, starting out in Mesa, wasn't all that easy. After about a year and a half, I was doing reasonably well and I had met several Republican lawyers in Phoenix. We started a Young Republican's Club and by 1950, we had enough to have a state convention. We got Howard Pyle to address our state convention. Howard gave this tub-thumping speech and said these very words: "I will do anything for the Republican party from punching doorbells on up or down." He left and about a half hour later, somebody got the bright idea of drafting Howard Pyle to run for governor. So with great enthusiasm, we said, "Yes." He was called and told about this and looking back, I wonder why he didn't say, "Oh forget it," because he was in the broadcast business and very good, a very well known and capable person.



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But he thought about it for a while and talked to his old friend, Barry Goldwater. They decided maybe this was the time because the governor at that time had been secretary of state and he had succeeded Governor Osborn who died in office.

**ZL:** Who was the governor?

**JR:** Dan Garvey was the governor. It looked like he would possibly be the candidate in 1950 and he wouldn't be too difficult to beat. As a matter of fact, he didn't win the primary. Anna Fromiller won the primary and Arizona was not ready for a woman governor. Anyway, Howard Pyle did win. But prior to that time, Barry had called me and I had never met him before and he said that since I had had something to do with drafting Howard to run for governor, they needed to have a full slate under him because at that time, we had the straight vote. You could vote one X and that's the whole party. He said I'm drafting you to run for Attorney General. I said, "Well, there's something you ought to know. I don't want to be Attorney General." He said, "There's something you should know. You won't be Attorney General. This state is four to one Democrat." I said, "Okay." So with that understanding, "All right I'll run." So that's the way I got involved in politics. Howard won and I didn't, but Howard and Barry and I got to be very good friends.

**ZL:** How much campaigning did you do for that election?

**JR:** Quite a bit.

**ZL:** Around the state?

**JR:** Around the state. Barry had this Beech Bonanza, and Howard and I would fly with him to Douglas and Nogales and the places around there, so I got to know quite a few people. Just after that election or sometime around then, I got one of those breaks that young lawyers think about but seldom get. My landlord was a doctor. We had sold 278 East Buffalo and it was a big deal. I think we made \$2,000 on it. If we held onto it for another four years, it would probably have been \$20,000. The doctor came to me one night just in a state and showed me this paper. It was an indictment. He had been indicted for violation of the Harrison Narcotics Act during World War II. I said, "Tell me about it." He said, "I never broke any of these laws." So the next morning in the paper, it was about not only his indictment but I think eight other doctors. Older doctors who hadn't been called to duty during World War II and were just so busy they could hardly stand it. And they were all indicted. So anyway, to make a long story short, we pled not guilty and went to trial and I was able to keep . . . In order to get evidence by trapping someone, you had to show evidence that there was reason to believe that that individual would break a law if he got the opportunity to do it. I got to be an instant expert on the law of entrapment. I said to the doctor, "There must have been something in your life that would cause them to think that you might break that law." "Not a thing, no way, nothing like that at all." During the trial, they put the agent on who had done the entrapment. He had done



all of these doctors and proved that the doctor had prescribed for his wife on his word, Codeine. Thank God he didn't prescribe Morphine because in fact, the old boy said I will give you Codeine. The story was that she was in a motel in Tempe and she was about to die and she just had to have Morphine. He said, "I won't give you Morphine, but I'll give you Codeine because I don't think it's habit forming." That saved him right there when he said that. To make an already long story less long maybe, the U.S. Attorney came in with a sheaf of prescriptions about two inches high that my doctor had prescribed for a known addict. So immediately I asked for a recess and I said, "Why didn't you tell me about that?" He said, "That's no problem, this fellow was a known addict and people knew all about him." I said, "Doctor, this could send you to prison." He said, "I don't think so." I said, "Well, you just better believe it. When was the last time you prescribed for this fellow?" He said, "Well, it seems to me he left here about a year and a half ago." So I went over and looked at the prescriptions and sure enough, the earliest one was about a year and a half before. So we went back into session. The judge was Judge Hall from Los Angeles. It was federal court and they had brought in a judge who didn't know any of these doctors. The judge said, "Mr. Counselor, do you have any objections?" I said, "Yes, Your Honor. I object on the grounds that the evidence offered is too remote." He said, "Objection sustained." So they didn't have any evidence that was admissible to show that the doctor was a person who might break the law. So the jury was out for 45 minutes and came back with not guilty. Of course, the papers were full of the thing and that's the best way a lawyer can advertise. So it was very helpful.

**ZL:** Who was the Democrat that ran for attorney general at that time?

**JR:** Fred Wilson. He was the attorney general and there wasn't any way I was going to beat Fred Wilson and I knew that and he knew it. The thing that happened was that I got well known not only in the state but in the party.

**ZL:** You probably hadn't that much opportunity to go around the state, had you? So in this way you went to Douglas and Nogales and probably Flagstaff?

**JR:** That's true. But when I was asked to run for Congress, Howard had served his term as governor and was running for reelection, Barry had decided to run for the Senate and some of my young Republican friends said to me, "You must run for the Congress in the First District." We only had two congressmen. I said, "I can't beat John Murdock." He had been there for eight terms and was chairman of the Interior Committee. One of them said, "Didn't do your law practice any harm to run for Attorney General, did it?" I said, "No." So I went home that night and Betty and I were planning on going to the Rotary Convention in Mexico City. This was in May. So I said, "Betty, would you be disappointed if we didn't go to Mexico City?" She said, "Alright, what are you running for?" I told her and she said, "Okay, let's do it." Congressman Murdock had two opponents in the primary and they really tore him limb from limb on the basis that he was ineffectual. He had boasted, which is a silly thing to do but he had, that when he became Chairman of the Interior Committee, he would get the Central Arizona Project authorized. He couldn't get



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it out of his own committee. He won the primary, but during the general . . . I had known Mr. Murdock and his daughter and son-in-law, so I didn't want to do anything that would hurt him and I didn't, because it had already been done. So all I said was, "I am a Republican and Dwight Eisenhower is going to be President of the United States and he needs me." It worked and I was able to win that one and we went from there.

**ZL:** When you look at some of the brutal elections that we have today . . .

**JR:** Terrible. It really saddens me and sickens me and everything else that they go back and go into your past and any little old thing they can find, they make news out of and the investigative reporter to me is an institution that I wish could be abated. Not that I want people to get by with doing sleazy things in secret, but nevertheless, their job depends on them writing stories that will sell newspapers. There have been an awful lot of really good people who have been crucified for things which they may or may not have done in their past. They've lived them down. Now on the other hand, of course, there are a lot of people who are getting by with some really bad things and they were exposed by reporters and they should have been exposed. But I guess my feeling is if it were possible to have more of a feeling for what's good for the country rather than what's good for me and my newspaper, I would feel better about it.

**ZL:** When you were elected to Congress, Arizona had two districts. Had that recently changed from at large?

**JR:** Yes. Arizona got another congressman in 1942. John Murdock had been elected in '36, I think, and Dick Harless was elected in '42 and they ran at large until I believe '48. Harless ran for governor that year because they both lived in the Phoenix area and he didn't want to have to run against John Murdock. He probably couldn't have beaten him anyway. So he ran for governor and did not win the primary. That was when Garvey . . . I guess Garvey won that primary, I think he did. Anyway, that's the way it happened and then in '47 the legislature districted the state so Porky Patten . . . Harold Patten did not like being called Porky; in fact, he spelled it Porque so that people wouldn't know that he was called Porky because he was a little chubby. He was a wonderful guy and he got to be a very good friend of mine. He was the congressman from the second district. The first district was Maricopa County and the second district was the rest of the state.

**ZL:** The rest of the state. That was a large order.

**JR:** It was. Porky used to say to me, "Yeah John, I've got the donut and you've got the hole." So you'd look at the map and that's the way it looked.

**ZL:** How many times while you were in Congress were the districts redrawn?



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**JR:** Each ten years. My district was, of course in '52, Maricopa County. In '62 it was cut down and that's when I lost the west side and the northwest and then in '72, I lost more from the north side of my district. I lost half of Scottsdale and a lot of Phoenix. Then in '82 the same . . . I've always been in Maricopa County, but not as big as I once was. In fact, in '82 the district was mainly the east side and south of the river.

**ZL:** The congressional leaders from Arizona have been very instrumental in a lot of key legislation. To what do you attribute that?

**JR:** Carl Hayden said it better than anybody. I didn't hear this, but it was told to me. Somebody said, Senator Hayden, what would you advise the people of a small state like Arizona to do with its congressional delegation? He said, "That's easy, just pick a smart young fellow and keep him there." And I think that's what happened. We had a lot of seniority. I'm thinking of the time that the Central Arizona Project was authorized which was '68. By that time, I had been there for 16 years and Carl Hayden had been there for 55 years - 1912, 56 years. And Stuart Udall was Secretary of the Interior by then. Mo was there. Mo and I were really the quarterbacks of the thing. And Paul Fannin was there. He was elected I think in '64.

**ZL:** When Barry ran for President?

**JR:** That's right. So that's the reason. Then of course Ernie McFarland had been Majority Leader of the Senate. In fact, he was Majority Leader when Barry defeated him in 1952. So we have been fortunate in having people who were in leadership or getting ready to be. By 1968, I was chairman of the Republican Policy Committee of the House and had been for, I guess, four years. Then after the authorization, the next thing that you try to do is try to get the money. I mean, the authorization is just a hunting license really. I was on the Appropriations Committee and had become ranking Republican on the Public Works Subcommittee, which is the one that handled reclamation appropriations. So I was in the right place at the right time as far as getting the money was concerned. Then I had to leave the Appropriations Committee. I left it because I was elected Minority Leader. Naturally that helps.

**ZL:** And you couldn't do both?

**JR:** No, in the House, if you're either Minority or Majority Leader or a Speaker, you don't have a committee. In the Senate you do. Anyway, as Minority Leader I had enough clout so that there was never any problem about getting money through the appropriations process.

**ZL:** You must have some very strong feelings about these term limitations?

**JR:** I do. I think it's ridiculous, particularly for a small state like Arizona. If there had been term limitations, say by 1930 or something like that, Carl Hayden wouldn't have been there, I wouldn't have



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been there, Barry wouldn't have been there, and we would have been outvoted and outmaneuvered and everything else by the large states. But as it was, we had enough seniority and enough clout so we could get the largest reclamation district ever dreamed of and not only get it authorized, but get it built. That's the reason I think that any small state that goes for term limitations is absolutely stupid.

**ZL:** Do you think they'll change that in Arizona soon?

**JR:** They can't really. At least I don't think they can. The Constitution says that your qualifications are these: you must be a citizen of the state and for the House you must be 25 years old and the Senate 30 years old and that's about all. In fact, the Supreme Court once voted Adam Clayton Powell out of Congress because of the fact that he had misappropriated some funds and done some things. And the Supreme Court said you can't do that because the Constitution provides the qualifications for the office and he met the qualifications. So I think that all of these people who are trying to get term limitations for national office are just whistling Dixie. The first time the Supreme Court . . . if they don't say that those limits are unconstitutional . . . they're going to have to rewrite the opinion in Powell vs. The United States. I just don't think that's going to happen. And I don't think it should happen. There are better ways to make sure that you have people who represent you properly.

**ZL:** I totally agree. When you were a freshman in Congress, you were assigned to the important House Interior Committee. How did you get such an important assignment early on?

**JR:** It really isn't all that important. It's important to our state and to the West, but it's not important to the rest of the country. We were in the middle of our fight with California about that time. When I went back there people were saying to me, California will never let you be on the Interior Committee. Well, the ranking Republican on the committee, or second ranking Republican was a fellow named Norris Poulson who was a Representative from California. I went to the National Reclamation Association convention just after I was elected and met Norris Poulson. I had never met him. He said, "We're so glad to have you in Washington. I want you to know that I'm going to do everything I can to get you on the Interior Committee," and he did. I was really kind of adopted by the Republicans in the California delegation because I was the only Republican in the West really. Norris Poulson was later elected Mayor of Los Angeles. In the Interior Committee, I enjoyed it and I was also on the Education and Labor committee. I had two committees. Neither of them would be called plums as far as that's concerned. In fact, I was sort of drafted to go on Education and Labor, but I used to thank my lucky stars that I was because I learned more labor law than I ever thought I was going to need and it was a very good thing for me to have done because organized labor was pretty powerful in the state at that time and they were certainly not happy with Republicans and the fact that I knew more about labor law than they did was very helpful.

**ZL:** I'd like to talk about the CAP. In the 20's and 30's it seems like there was very little effort on the part of Arizona to plan how to use Colorado River water. When did you first become aware of the Central



Arizona Project?

**JR:** Actually when I was first elected, John Murdock had been chairman of the committee that had to pass on the authorization and there was some feeling that sure, he didn't succeed the first time, but maybe given enough time he would. I felt that since I had defeated him, I had sort of a duty to do whatever I could to get in a position to get the authorization and the construction. Right from the very first, I had that very much in mind and in the Interior and Ancillary Affairs Committee one of the first big things we did was the Upper Colorado Storage Project which is what built Glen Canyon Dam. Stu Udall was on the committee too and we decided that if we were going to get help from the Upper Basin states to authorize our project after the lawsuit was finished, we would have to store up some brownie points with them. I didn't mean to skip over that lawsuit. The suit was filed in 1953, or I guess late '52 and that's the suit of Arizona vs. California in the Supreme Court to, in effect, quitclaim title to the water from the Colorado River which we now use. Stu and I went all out to help the authorization of the Upper Colorado Storage Project and you can imagine how embarrassed we were and how unhappy we were when later on, we had our bill up for authorization, our main problems came from the Upper Basin States. After California lost the lawsuit, which came down in 1966 I guess it was, they flipped over and said if you got the title to the water, we're going to help you get the project authorized. And they did. They were very helpful. If it hadn't been for California, I don't think we could've done the job that we finally were able to do. The chairman of the Interior Committee was Wayne Aspinall of Colorado. He was not in favor of us. They had the feeling that the good Lord caused the water to fall on their mountains and it was their water and so what were we doing trying to divert it? So California was very helpful.

**ZL:** From what I've been reading, then Governor Reagan of California changed the water czar who was Ely.

**JR:** Mike Ely was not the water czar. He was the counsel, fine lawyer, for the Metropolitan Water District and also I think for the Colorado River Commission of California. But Ronald Reagan did appoint Bill Gianelli and Bill was helpful to us. But only because the California interest and mainly Southern California had decided that there wasn't any reason why that water had to keep going into the Gulf of California.

**ZL:** So they changed their objectives?

**JR:** Completely.

**ZL:** Glen Canyon Dam was constructed in 1964. In 1965, there was a great deal of opposition to constructing dams on the Colorado. The Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society were vocally opposed. How did you respond to their opposition?



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**JR:** We finally outflanked them. The Central Arizona Project plans as drawn up by the Bureau of Reclamation, consisted of lifting the water from behind Parker Dam up some 800 plus feet and having it flow through a tunnel in the Buckskin Mountains and then mainly by gravity into the central part of the state. Actually, there were lifts along the way. Of course, it took a tremendous amount of power to lift that water up to begin with. Part of the project was to build a dam in Bridge Canyon, which was on the Colorado, and use the hydropower from that to power the pumps that would bring the water into Central Arizona. As you just mentioned, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth and all of the others really got up in arms and said, “You just can't do this to the Grand Canyon.” Actually, the Bridge Canyon Dam would not have backed water up into the Grand Canyon. It was an absolute hoax, but they were able to sell it throughout the eastern part of the United States and get a lot of members, Sierra Club members and things like this who would pay the dues to save the Grand Canyon. As I say, it was a hoax, but they had the power to give us all kinds of problems as far as getting the authorization was concerned. Stuart Udall had the idea, he was Secretary of the Interior, of doing away with the Bridge Canyon Dam and building the power plant at Page which we now have and use that power to lift the water from Parker Dam for the Central Arizona Project. That's how we overcame the opposition. Interestingly enough, they just fell for it lock, stock and barrel. “This is great. We're so happy you're not going to back water up into the Grand Canyon.” Now, of course, they were the ones who finally got the idea that the smoke from the Page plant was doing all sorts of things to the pure air over the Canyon, which it didn't. That settlement has always kind of grieved me because the prevailing winds down the Canyon are west to east and in order for the smoke from the Page plant to do anything to the Grand Canyon, you are going to have to reverse the wind. Well, it just didn't. But nevertheless, there was enough political pressure behind that to force a settlement which is going to cost the rate payers of Arizona a lot of money. I wish it hadn't been done, but it is, so that's the way it has to be.

**ZL:** Representative John Saylor of Pennsylvania seemed to be a particular thorn in the side of Arizona in regards to the CAP. Can you explain that to me?

**JR:** Yes, very easily. John Saylor was cantankerous. And that's a nice word for what John Saylor was. But he also had a constituency, and this constituency was the environmentalist. He was carrying the ball for the environmental movement. Interestingly enough, as soon as we decided to give up Bridge Canyon, he just folded his tent completely and actually ended up supporting the Central Arizona Project. That was part of the thing which Stuart Udall was able to put together. He not only got the support of the Sierra Club, he got support from John Saylor which is really more important. But John could be tough and he was and it's better to have him on your side than against you. Incidentally, his brother was a classmate of mine at Harvard Law School.

**ZL:** So eventually when it came time to coauthor the bill you, along with the two other representatives, coauthored the bill in the House and Barry Goldwater and Carl Hayden coauthored the bill in the Senate.



**JR:** No, Barry was not there. Paul Fannin.

**ZL:** That's right, Barry had just run.

**JR:** And he didn't come back until 1968, the election of '68. But Sam Steiger was the other member of the House at that time.

**ZL:** There were just two of you?

**JR:** No, Sam and Mo and me.

**ZL:** Another piece of legislation that you introduced was designed to set up a bureau in the Department of Commerce as a federal clearinghouse to record the action when a state revoked a driver's license.

**JR:** That came about because one day I was talking to Greg Hathaway who was the head of the Arizona Highway Patrol at that time. I said, "Are there any national problems that I could help you with?" He said, "Yeah, I don't know how we're going to keep people who have driver's licenses revoked in other states from coming into Arizona and lying and getting a driver's license. It's amazing the number of accidents we have caused by people who have had driver's licenses revoked in other states." I said, "What do you think?" He said, "If we could just get some way for the state to report when it revokes a driver's license, then when we get applications for driver's licenses, we could clear them through this federal agency." So I said, "Fine." So I introduced a bill. This is a Democratic Congress of course. Usually when you introduce a bill like that, you are perfectly aware of the probability that if it's going anywhere, somebody is going to steal it from you. The chairman of the subcommittee of the Commerce Committee at that time was Kenneth Roberts from Alabama. Ken and I lived about a block apart in Wood Acres at that time in Washington and we used to drive together and we got to be very good friends. I told him about this bill and he said, "I'm going to hold some hearings on that." So he did. Instead of stealing it, he reported it out and we got it to the floor and it had my name on it which was something that I really hadn't expected to happen. But Ken was that kind of a person. So it went to the Senate and over there, the senator from New Jersey (I'll think of his name later) is the one who did the job of getting it through the Senate. As far as I know, the agency is still operating.

**ZL:** Do you remember what year that was?

**JR:** No. I really don't, but it had to be in the '60s sometime, probably '65 or '66.

**ZL:** Sounds like a wonderful help.

**JR:** I think it has been.



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**ZL:** In 1974, President Nixon was in his second term. The situation was very serious with a lot of talk about impeachment. What was it like to be in the House at that time?

**JR:** It was just terrible to be minority leader at that time. Naturally as things developed, we found out more and more things that were troublesome and I remember in January, I think it was, of 1974, Barry and I were talking about various things and I said, “The thing that bothers me is that I had this terrible feeling, in fact I had a dream about it, that you and I went down to the White House to tell the Republican President that he was all through.” He said, “Good Lord, I hope that doesn't happen.” I said, “Well, so do I.” That's exactly what did happen. But it was just a snowball. It kept building and when Bernstein and his partner, more things would come to light. Nixon would make a speech about your President is not a crook and one of his daughters would talk about what a wonderful man her daddy was and we all helped.

Barry and I came out to Phoenix with Richard Nixon and had a big rally. This was '74, I think March or April, at the Veterans Coliseum and it filled up. It was very strong for Nixon, very strong. Prior to that time, he told somebody that . . . the Vietnam War, of course, was not popular particularly in colleges . . . he would like very much to be able to go to a college if he thought he would be treated properly. My alma mater was Kansas State University and if there was any place where he could probably be treated well, it would be Kansas State. So the Kansas Delegation and I got on the plane with the President. Kansas State filled the field house and he gave a great speech and it was just wonderful. You think it's okay now, things are working out all right and then something else would happen. Woodward and Bernstein would come up with something else. It was just deteriorating to the point where he was losing support.

Then, of course, the Judiciary Committee . . . well it had been the Senate Investigating Committee which actually it was during that time that the existence of the tapes was discovered. Then the whole thing centered around the tapes, making the President give them up and so on and so forth. Then about that time, several people were indicted like the White House staff, John Dean and John Ehrlichman and Bob Haldeman, were indicted and there were things coming out there. It just got to the point where I was saying to myself, I don't see any way that this man can continue to govern the country because they were just after him like a pack of dogs. But the problem was a lot of it was of his own doing. Richard Nixon was really done in by his own words in those tapes. That's, I think, what finally caused that smoking gun tape which is the one of June 26 of '72 where he told Bob Haldeman to call the CIA and have the CIA call the FBI and tell them, “Let's do away with this investigation on the grounds of national security.” That was the smoking gun. If you wanted to give a perfect example to a law school class of obstruction of justice, it would look a lot like that. That's when I finally decided that there wasn't anything to be done about this and so we went down and told him.

**ZL:** It must have been a tough meeting.



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**JR:** It wasn't really. Actually, I say we went down and told him. He asked us to come down. It was Hugh Scott, the Republican leader of the Senate and Barry Goldwater who was the only member of the House and Senate who had been a Republican nominee for President. Barry had done a lot of things for Richard Nixon, and Richard Nixon in '64 was one of the few Republican leaders who really went all out for Barry Goldwater. So Nixon asked for him and for me. I was Republican leader of the House at that time. He said, "You know why you're here?" Then he said to me, "I understand that my support in the House has deteriorated" and I said, "Yes, Mr. President it has. If there were a vote today, there would be an impeachment." He said to Barry, completely ignored Hugh Scott . . . Hugh Scott was of the Eastern liberal establishment and they were never good friends of Richard Nixon . . . "I guess if it came to the Senate today, I would be convicted." Barry said, "Yes, you would, Mr. President." So he said, "Well I've got a terrible decision to make and I just want you to know I'm going to make it in what I think is the best interests of the country." There was talk then about pardons. There was talk about whether or not he could keep his pension. He said, "I'm not interested in pensions or pardons or anything of that nature, just want to do what's right." So with that, we started to leave and I said, "Mr. President, when we get out here, the whole press corps is going to be there and it would be my hope that you would agree that the thing we should tell them is that you didn't ask us for any advice and we didn't give you any." And that was true. He said, "I would really appreciate it if that was the way it would come out." Well, that's the way we did it. But we all knew what the answer was going to be.

**ZL:** In recent years, he's gained in stature as an elder statesman, particularly in relationship to China.

**JR:** Oh, yes. He's a brilliant man and he's probably as good at foreign affairs and at geopolitics as anybody I ever knew. I mentioned that the California delegation was very friendly to me and it used to be while he was Vice-President . . . every now and then he would ask a few of us to come to his little Capitol hideaway for a drink at five o'clock. He would have a map of the world there and for about 45 minutes we would have a tour of the world with Richard M. Nixon. He would go from here to here to here and tell all about what was happening and how it was going to affect this country - absolutely brilliant. From time to time, he would do that. That's why when people used to say to me, he is so lucky to have Henry Kissinger, I said, "Yes he is, but you know what? Henry Kissinger is lucky to have him." They were a great team.

**ZL:** You have such a unique perspective since your residence is here and yet you were representing Arizona, but you were in Congress in Washington and you could see situations from a national level. How do you see the changes in Arizona, the growth of the state, technological changes, the water from the CAP?

**JR:** Well, it's been not only fascinating but in some ways surprising that a state can grow as rapidly as we have and still keep the lid on reasonably. We're doing some things that I wish we wouldn't do and we're not getting some things done that we need to do, but mainly the state's done a pretty good job. One of the things . . . and I make speeches about this and people used to say, "Oh don't say that again." Well I have to,



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because to me, one of the most ridiculous things is that the state constitution does not allow the state to issue general obligation bonds. . . only \$350,000. Now in 1912 that might have been a lot of money but it sure isn't now. So whenever we have a capital improvement, we have to pay for it out of general revenue that was collected this year. That's one reason taxes are so high. There's a gimmick. They have this lease purchase thing so they would get somebody to build the building for them and then you lease it back and that's the most expensive thing you can do. A general obligation bond would save at least two percentage points in capital obligations over the cost of lease purchase and everybody is scared to death of it. When Sam Goddard was governor, he mentioned this and everybody just went up in smoke. Oh the idea, we're going to raid the states, well there are ways to safeguard that. But the politics are bad. They think it is. Actually in my campaign for governor, if it had gone another week, I was going to propose a constitutional amendment to allow the state to issue general obligation bonds with this safeguard that the legislature would have to authorize the expenditure first and the legislature would have to set the terms of the bonds and then the governor, of course, could either veto it or not. But with that kind of safeguard, you wouldn't have to worry too much about them going crazy. Anyway, it's not being done and I can't even get the Phoenix Forty interested in it.

**ZL:** You served in the House for thirty years so there were a lot of changes that occurred during that time. First of all, how did your role in the House change during that time?

**JR:** Like the role of a person would when you are a freshman from a small state and then you are able to get enough clout so that you get on the Appropriations Committee, which is a real plum, instead of the committees which you had been on, which you enjoyed but were not really plums. Then you get elected - first appointed chairman of the subcommittee of the policy committee for research - and then elected chairman of the policy committee in which you served for nine years, and then you get to be leader of the House. So yes, things do change and the thing which caused me to leave really was the realization that changes were about to occur that I didn't approve. The Kemp-Roth bill was one which provided for a tax cut without regard to whether or not there was a balanced budget. I couldn't handle that. But the youngest Republicans, in the first place, were saying that those of us who were of my vintage were old fogies really. What they actually said was that we had a minority complex. We'd been in the minority for so long and of course, that wasn't true. Nevertheless, I could see that I was getting in the position of a leader who wasn't going to have any troops behind him because they were going to go off to the right and I was going to go off to the left or whatever. So after thirty years being in the minority that long was really getting to me. I felt that we had much more talent than they did on the Democratic side, yet we didn't have the votes. Those are the main reasons I decided at the time; then there was the selfish reason too. The selfish reason being that I was getting at the age where if I was going to do anything after Congress, I was going to have to get out and start because as you know, after 65, people don't really want you to start something new. So that had a lot to do with it.

**ZL:** Let's talk about that. Since you retired from the House in January of '83, you've been with the Hunton



& Williams Law Firm in D.C. while making your home in Mesa. Now it is interesting that you have reached an age where a lot of people have retired.

**JR:** True. I just didn't have any thought of retiring really. In fact, people still say how do you like retirement? I say, "When I retire, I'll let you know." But actually, the firm I went with first was Cummings & Lockwood which was a Connecticut firm. The reason I went with them was because Dennis Taylor, who had been my legislative assistant, got out before I did and he was from Connecticut so he went into the Washington office of Cummings & Lockwood so I decided to go with them. It was good. I enjoyed it a lot, but they didn't have the kind of practice that really lent itself to a Washington office and they were putting money into the office and we were building the practice up, but it was not rapid. So they decided to close the Washington office and I agreed with them completely. I said, "I think you should."

About that time, there was an article in one of the legal magazines about that office closing. I got a call from my old roommate, John Reilly, who was a Richmond boy. He went home and was recruited to Hunton & Williams by Louis Powell, who later became the Supreme Court Justice. John Reilly said, "Rhodes, you got through my net once and you're not going to do it again. What are you doing for lunch tomorrow?" I said, "I'm having it with you." So he came up and we went to lunch and to make a long story short, I decided to go with Hunton & Williams and it's been great.

**ZL:** What kind of practice is it?

**JR:** It's a Washington practice. I still have personal connections on Capitol Hill and at the White House and in various parts of the government. There are those who say that it's a lobbying practice. I don't have any problem with that name except it really isn't very accurate because I don't walk up and down the halls of the Capitol and corral people like some others do. The firm's practice is so wide and so varied that I can be helpful to them in many, many ways just by analyzing a problem and saying these are the choke points and these are the people who can be helpful and these are the things they're going to want to know. Sometimes, of course, I make phone calls and I make appointments, but when do, I have a piece of paper in my hand and I say I'm going to leave this with you and we talk about this and that. Quite often, I'm able to get them to do some things to a piece of legislation that's going through that would be helpful to the clients. But I've told that firm, "Don't you ever let me go or send me to Capitol Hill unless I'm wearing a white hat." They said, "Don't worry, we won't." And they never have because I wouldn't do it. I spent 30 years building up a reputation and there's no way I'm going to ask a member of the House or Senate to do something that I wouldn't have done if I had been there.

**ZL:** And I'm sure the people in Congress know that.

**JR:** They do indeed. It's a good feeling to have that kind of rapport.



**ZL:** How much time do you spend back there?

**JR:** Over a period of a year, it'll probably be about 35 or 40 percent. Betty and I do a lot of traveling and so probably 10 percent of the year we'll be traveling and the rest of the time we'll be here in Mesa or here in Pinetop. It's a nice life.

**ZL:** So you're enjoying this?

**JR:** I love it. It's a nice life and the thing about Hunton & Williams, I say the practice is so varied that I can do about anything that I'm big enough to do and I kind of like that.

**ZL:** They're discussing closing Williams Air Force Base.

**JR:** It's closing, they're not discussing it anymore, it's going to close.

**ZL:** What do you think of that and what do you think they should do with it? Do you like this idea of turning it into an east campus for ASU?

**JR:** In the first place, that's my old home and I kept it open at least twice during the time that I was in Congress along with Carl Hayden. I remember particularly one year the Secretary of Defense was a fellow named Gates, a Republican from Philadelphia, and they were really sincere about wanting to close Willy at that time. I called Carl Hayden and said, "Carl, if I pick you up, would you go over to the Pentagon with me and talk to Secretary Gates?" He said, "Yeah, what about?" So I told him and he said, "Sure, let's do it." So we went over and I had a brief as to why they shouldn't be closing this base and should be closing others. There was the Chairman of the Policy Committee of the House and the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and it just so happened that we got his attention. In a very short period of time, we were told to forget it, we're not closing Willy and they started spending more money there.

Anyway, I realized that we really need to cut down on the Defense Department. I also realized that the Congress being the way it is, it's very difficult to get any legislation which would result in the closing of a base. The Congress did a very brave thing and I approved of it completely and that was to pass a law that would create a commission to decide what bases would have to be closed, submit it to the President and if the President approved it, then it would be either voted up or down in the Senate, no amendments. Well it so happened, that they decided to close Williams and I was sorry about it, but nevertheless, the big picture was that they were going to close an awful lot of other bases too and save an awful lot of money, so I really couldn't complain too much about it. And Arizona was well treated. We still have Fort Huachuca and we have Yuma Test Station and we have Davis Monthan and we have Luke and you can't be a dog in the manger forever.



As to the future use of Williams, I was in hopes that McDonnell Douglas would take it to probably build number twelve. There used to be a DC. Now I guess it's an MD 12. It'll be a huge airplane and I gather that they aren't quite likely to do that. I don't know that, but that's what I understand. Also, Lattie Coor tells me that within the next ten years, or I guess before the turn of the century, there will be 12,000 more college students in Maricopa County. The Tempe establishment is about as big as you can make it. They have the West Campus and I think it would be fine to use part of Williams Field for that. There is a possibility that it would be used for a regional airport. I'm not too sure that's likely to be. It's a little bit too close to Sky Harbor for the kind of traffic that they might get into a base like that. But I'm not up on that sort of thing. I'll leave that to people who know the techniques better than I. Williams will be a great asset to the state and to the Valley.

During my tenure, there was a naval air facility at Litchfield Park. They called me one day and I said, "Could somebody come over and explain to me what they're going to do to Litchfield Park?" Well they did. The idea was that they were going to close it. I said, "Now you just wait a minute. I'm not sure that I want you to do this." So they said, "We'll give you two months." I got in touch with people who knew and gave the reasons why it either should close or shouldn't close and came up with the personal decision that they were probably right, maybe they ought to close it. So I went out and talked to the people . . . I had the whole county at that time . . . in that area and said, "What do you want me to do?" They said, "Can you save it?" I said, "Frankly I don't think I can." Finally, somebody said, "If it's going to close, tell them to close it now. Do it right now so we can start to locate industry around it." I went back and said, "Close it now." They did, turned it over to the City of Phoenix and I imagine that there are at least five times as many people employed around that former naval air facility as it employed when it was in operation. That's just a microcosm really of the things that can happen at Williams.

**ZL:** Some of these articles in the paper have really been optimistic about what may happen.

**JR:** I'm optimistic about it. I think it can be a great asset. The main thing we have to do is to make sure that they don't mothball it because that wouldn't help anybody.

**ZL:** As our country kind of starts graying in an ever increasing population of retirees and you have reached that age, have you given a lot of thought as to how we might harness . . . people are healthier, they have more energy, a lot of them are financially all right. How can we harness that energy to help the country?

**JR:** One of the things that we need is to do away with the ceiling for people who get Social Security as far as outside income is concerned. Because they aren't going to put to use the expertise they have unless they're well compensated for it. That's the first thing I would hope we could do. Naturally along with that would be an inventory of needs that people of advanced age, but with great experience, can fill. You



shouldn't get me started on Social Security because I just go on too much. But anyway Social Security, if we could do it over, we would do it a lot differently than it is now.

One of the things which we would have done is probably to do it with IRAs instead of having the money paid into the federal government. When you look at the investment that would have been made by people with IRAs at that time and the interest structure that we could have built, it makes you want to weep. But with the situation as it now is with the money from the Social Security trust fund that's being spent in the government, it's a great temptation to keep the government getting larger and larger and it shouldn't be. It should be done the other way. I feel that the Social Security trust fund ought to be invested in something other than the government and in order to do that, there has to be an income. As an example, if you want to build some track for the Southern Pacific, you build the track and then you charge the Southern Pacific enough so that as it depreciates, it pays back, not only the original cost but a reasonable profit also. That's really what Social Security was supposed to have been. They talked about an insurance plan. It wasn't insurance because there was no corpus for the investments. The only thing that was there was government bonds and I don't deprecate government bonds except that they have to be redeemed by the tax structure as the years go by. They don't really provide anything in the way of new wealth. I think we made some pretty bad mistakes along those lines.

**ZL:** Since you retired from Congress, you've been involved in a lot of volunteer activities, but one of them is the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget and you're co-chairman of that group.

**JR:** I was; I'm still on the board.

**ZL:** Would you talk about that committee and its objectives.

**JR:** Yes. It was put together by Congressman Giaimo of Connecticut and by Henry Bellmon, a senator from Oklahoma. Bob Giaimo was chairman of the House Budget Committee and Henry Bellmon was ranking Republican on the Senate budget committee. The staff director for the minority of the Senate was a girl named Carol Cox, a redheaded gal, smart as she can be. When they put the committee together, they hired Carol to be the honcho and the idea is to try to keep the people of the country realizing that we don't have a balanced budget and that someday we're going to have to do it. One of the things which we do is very interesting. Carol put together what she calls hard facts and hard choices. We take this study and actually we did one here in Jay's district about four years ago. What you do is to get a member of the House or Senate to bring people together from all walks of life, farmers, laborers, bankers, lawyers, etc. and you put them all in a room and try to get between 40 and 50. You have tables of eight and you give each one of them the hard facts and hard choices and say all right, now you go and balance the budget. It's amazing. The farmers start saying, you can't do this to the farmer, the subsidy, you've got to have that. And the laboring man will say, gee whiz, what we need is to spend more money on highways and create more employment. Then you've got somebody who's interested in defense, maybe a contractor or something,



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you can't cut defense like that. Well, the thing that happens is that they start making bargains and start to say well, if you're willing to cut defense that much, I suppose we can get by with less subsidy and they end up by balancing the budget. Sometimes they say, well I'm sorry but we're going to have to raise taxes. They actually were able to get the people to talk about it and one of the things was this elderly gentleman, of course who was getting Social Security, and he was saying, you can't cut Social Security. And somebody said, "Well now, you know you've been drawing it for five years and at the end of four years, you had gotten all of the money back that you ever put in." He said, "That's all right." They had this dialogue going just to show how tough it is to get people to make the hard decisions that we have to make to balance the budget.

**ZL:** Yet every family has to make those decisions.

**JR:** Absolutely. The problem is that the people of the country have just never realized what it's doing to us and until they do, politically people are just not going to take the political risk that they have to take. It's too bad. One year, I think in the first year of the Reagan administration, we actually put a bill together that had the effect of working pretty much toward a balanced budget. It didn't pass. The will was not there because the people haven't spoken really. Until they do, they're still going to have these little goodies that they like to pass out.

**ZL:** In 1982, you were honored by the Vesta Club of Arizona for service to the Hispanic people. Would you talk about the ways you have helped the Hispanics?

**JR:** I don't really have any specifics except that I've always had a Hispanic person on my staff, at least one. In my campaigns, I always went down to South Phoenix and usually would go to one of the Catholic bazaars from time to time. The Chicanos por la Causa was something that I liked to help and I did from time to time. Tommy Espinoza was a good friend and I was able to do some things that were helpful to them. One of our Hispanic members from Arizona was once the national president of the national Hispanic organization and I did a lot of things to help him when he was national president and went to the convention in El Paso. I guess you can say I've been as involved in the Hispanic community as I could and very sympathetic to them and admiring of them. I think as a group of American citizens, they are just great. They really are. They work hard and they are mainly pretty conservative. They don't like to get handouts or anything of that nature and I don't know. I just like them a lot. Also, the American Legion post, the Thunderbird post is made up almost completely of Hispanics. Barry Goldwater is a member of that post. He may be the only Anglo that is. But I used to go down there a lot and work with them.

**ZL:** From your unique perspective of spending time both in Arizona and Washington, how do you view the future for Arizona?

**JR:** I think our future is bright because of many things. One is the climate and its natural resources and our



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university systems. People like to come where there are cultural advantages. Not only in the universities, but also the symphony and the art museums and things like that. We have a ways to go insofar as the arts and culture are concerned, but we're doing pretty well. Another thing we have to do is to get our state finances under control. That's the reason that I took all that time to mention that the general obligation bonds ought to be made available because after all, this really is one of the most rapidly growing states in the union and the idea that for all the things that you need for a growing population, you have to pay for it year after year after year is a little ridiculous. After all, the things that you're building are going to be there for future generations and there's no reason why they shouldn't help to pay for them. Until we learn that and get our revenue system in better order, it will be difficult to attract people to the state for two reasons. One is the taxes are going to have to go up which is too bad and the second is that we aren't able to do the things like mental health. We are so far behind in the mental health facilities that it's just criminal. Yet we have an unbalanced budget. Actually, they do balance it but they do it with smoke and mirrors. I really feel that that's the key to the future of this state to get a revenue and financial structure which will help us and in fact, allow us to do the things that we have to do to make this really a first class state.

**ZL:** What about attracting industry?

**JR:** I think we're doing reasonably well with that, but again, industry likes to come where it's easy to get people to employ, who have good labor markets and we mainly have that. But when high technology industry moves into a place, they want to be sure that it is a place that people who would work in a high tech and would be able to do the jobs that are required would like to be there. That goes back again to your universities and your culture and arts and things of that nature.

**ZL:** Mr. Rhodes, that concludes the questions I have. If you have anything else you would like to add . . .

**JR:** No, I don't. I think we've done a very good job of covering it and I've enjoyed it and I enjoy your questions. You certainly do well.

**ZL:** Thank you very much. I've enjoyed it too. We'll conclude for today.

**ZL:** We've discovered that there's more to tell. Mr. Rhodes is going to talk about some of his travels and he's going to start with his trip to Viet Nam.

**JR:** The first trip to Viet Nam was probably in 1963 because it was after the Kennedy assassination and I was a member of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. The chairman was Otto Passman of Louisiana and every year Otto would go on a junket. I went with him a couple of times. This particular time, we were starting to pour quite a bit of money into Viet Nam. The Foreign Operations Subcommittee appropriated the funds to begin with until after we got so deeply



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involved that it became the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, which I was on later, that put up the money. We took off on the usual junket. We went to Madrid and then to Geneva and Otto would buy something in Madrid and then he'd buy watches in Geneva and then we went to Rome and then to Beirut. We were all the while shopping and talking to people also. I don't want to indicate that we didn't work; we did work. But I kept saying to Otto, "We don't have Saigon on our itinerary." He said, "Oh no. We're not going to Saigon." So about the third time I said, "Otto, we're pouring a lot of money into there." He said, "John, there's nothing to buy in Saigon." So I said, "Okay." We got to New Delhi. The ambassador was Chester Bowles who had been a member of the Congress from Connecticut. So I took Chester aside and said, "Chester, we're over here and we're not going to Viet Nam. I think one of us ought to go." He said, "I agree with you." I said, "Can you make arrangements for me to do it?" So he did. I went all by myself to Saigon and I landed at Tan Son Nhat Air Base of course, and was looking for somebody to meet me and nobody seemed to be interested. I did see this fellow sort of standing in the corner so I went over and said, "Are you waiting for somebody?" He said, "Yeah, I'm waiting for a congressman." I said, "Well, here he is." So I found out later that he was the lowest ranking person in the embassy. He wasn't even a foreign service officer. He took me to a hotel and it was perfectly all right. It wasn't the best hotel, but that's okay. I read French reasonably well so I was reading the paper and found that there was to be a service at the Buddhist Temple the next day. It was the anniversary of the death of John Kennedy. So when this fellow came back to get me, I said, "Would you please tell Ambassador Taylor that I am going with him to the ceremony honoring President Kennedy." He said, "Oh, that won't be possible." I said, "I didn't ask you if that was possible. I said I'm going. Now will you tell General Taylor?" I found out later that Taylor didn't even know I was in town until then. Anyway, we did go to this amazing . . . it was in a huge Quonset hut type thing. We took off our shoes, of course, and it was completely packed. Kennedy was a real hero to an awful lot of people around this world, particularly, I guess, in that area. So we went up and down the middle aisle and at the end of the building was the Buddhist Wheel of Life in neon, blue and red neon. It was rather bizarre. As I said, we had our shoes off and they seated us on the floor in front of this and President Kennedy's picture was just below it. We were immediately surrounded by the saffron robed priests and they began to chant. It was fantastic. A real cacophony. Yet, after a little while, you got the rhythm of it and it was really pretty interesting and likeable. Anyway, we were obviously the guests of honor and after it was over, we left.

**ZL:** How long was the service?

**JR:** About 45 minutes, maybe an hour. We were in General Taylor's car and he said, "What else would you like to do?" I said, "I thought you'd never ask." At that time, we were putting money into what they called fortified hamlets. The thing that the Viet Cong were doing was living off the people out in the "toolies" as we say and the people didn't like it but they couldn't resist them. They didn't have the means of doing it. So we were helping them to build fortifications around these various hamlets. I said, "I want to go out and see some fortified hamlets," so no problem. I never did see that lowest ranking officer again. I don't know what happened to him and I don't care. Nevertheless, after that I got to see everything I wanted



to see. That was the first trip.

The second trip was when Jay, our eldest child, was over there. He had taken ROTC at Yale and had a commission, but they let him go to law school before they took him into the service. Then he went into military intelligence and spent a year at Fort Ord learning the language so by the time I got over there, he had been in his duty station which was Tuy Hoa. It was on the coast. An old Viet Minh area, Communist, it was not a safe station by any manner or means. Anyway, I spent two days with him there. The first night I was awakened by artillery fire and the next morning I said, "Jay, did the artillery fire bother you?" He said, "No, not particularly. It would've last month." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, last month our covering force was a division of the Vietnamese, but we've got the Koreans up there now and they're tough. Nobody's going to get through them."

So then he was appointed as my aide and we went from Tuy Hoa up to Da Nang and on up to the demilitarized zone. They call it the DMZ and we spent a day with the first ARVIP division out there. Then we came down with the first Marine division and later the Screaming Eagles. We went over to the first cavalry and then we went down to the Delta and spent some time there. Jay said after he came back that he saw more of Viet Nam in the week that he was my aide than he had seen all the rest of the time.

Then I went to Laos and had some really interesting experiences there. I was taken up to the Bolaven Plateau and the crow tribesmen were up there and their wives and children and everybody else. They had two 105mm howitzers and the Ho Chi Minh trail was right down below. While I was there, they got a target and being an old artilleryman, I was very much interested in this. They loaded their pieces and they fired and I had field glasses. They fired over the target and the second, short of the target and the third one, they got the darnedest explosion down there you ever saw in your life. They must have hit an ammunition truck and it was interesting to see how they did it.

Then I went from there up to Vientiane and the ambassador was a fellow named G. McMurtrie Godley III who was . . . I called him the field marshal because he was really running that place, he wasn't just an ambassador, he was running the war. So he took me up to one of the secret bases. The Mao tribes were out there. We had a C-46 and had it opened at the end and we were feeding the tribes because it was that time of the year when they needed help. What they did was to head toward a mountain or hill that had been cleared and the people at the right time would start pushing the bags of grain out. We'd be up 500 feet or so and they would land against the hill so they wouldn't break. It was fantastic. When we took off from this base, the weather had closed in a bit and it was surrounded by mountains, so I said to the pilot, "Do we have enough gas." "Oh yeah, we're in good shape." I said, "Can we get over the mountains?" He said, "I sure do hope so." I said, "So do I, fella." So anyway we took off and went up, up, up. I'm looking at those mountains and we cleared them by about that much I think.

Then we got back to Vientiane and when we got there, we went to the ambassador's office and his aide



whispered something to him. So I went into the office with him and there was Vang Pao who was the chief of the Mao tribe. So I had a chance, he spoke in English, to talk to him about what the Mao's were doing and they were giving the Communists fits. I mean really, they were very efficient. About maybe two or three years later, I got a call. Vang Pao's son wanted to get into the Staunton Military Academy so I was able to help him do that and pleased about that. Those were the times I was in Viet Nam.

One thing I don't want to forget, one of the things which I said as a member of the defense subcommittee was I couldn't see why you had to give a general officer pilot training in order for him to command an airborne division. General Walker who was in command of the Screaming Eagles had read this when he'd heard that I was coming and so he just said, "Congressman, I couldn't agree with you less and I'm going to show you why." So we got on a Huey, he took the wheel, flew it and we went out over the A Shau Valley. I saw this mountain that had been cleared and I said, "What's with that?" He said, "Well, we just cleared it. We used dynamite and things like that. By five o'clock tonight, that's going to be a fire base." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "We have the capability of dropping things there, the artillery pieces, the things that are needed to sustain the troops, drop the troops by parachute, and by five o'clock tonight, it will be firing." The most fantastic thing I ever saw, the capabilities. It was a good thing for a person in my particular position at that time to be able to do. It gave me a feel for what was happening over there.

**ZL:** And it's so hard when you're not there.

**JR:** Well, that's it.

