

Q: This is November 1st, 2006. This is Mike Smith, interviewing Judge Roman Gribbs at the Walter P. Reuther Library. Judge Gribbs, when we finished our last session, we got you into the mayor's office, you spoke about some of your early hires, in particular an African-American deputy mayor, and you spoke about the situation you inherited -- a huge deficit and some problems. It was, of course, after the Cavanagh administration, and only three years after the devastating riot in Detroit. I'd like to have you talk about some of your specific programs. For example, one of the programs that were very successful in '72 was the Neighborhood Youth Corps. I wonder if you could speak to that?

A: Well, Detroit, like most major, substantial cities, had a disproportionate share of poverty. And along with that is that, even in those areas where both parents were employed, you have youth that are restless in the summertime. There were a number of federal grants available, so we knocked on doors in Washington and we established a youth jobs program. I had a Detroit Youth Board that would focus attention on the special problems of the kids. So, if you get some money, you hire some supervision and you can then be an agency to help the kids to get either a job or else to play in sports during the summer months and stay out of

trouble. There's nothing as challenging as a teenager that's got a lot of ambition, a lot of energy, but doesn't know how to release it.

Q: Could you discuss the situation as you saw it at that time? What was missing for the youth at that time, and what the situation that caused you to develop programs for them?

A: It's an ongoing -- it really exists all the time. The core cities, like Detroit and Baltimore and Chicago have families that don't know how to direct the kids, or they're poor and they're working two jobs or have no money. You have to take hold of those kids, to organize them in a fashion, and for any program, you have to have money. So we established the programs to do that. We were looking for grants from the federal government under Lyndon Johnson earlier, and then continued to do so with the next the President. I was able to direct some of the monies to Detroit and establish the youth programs, and it was just a satisfying effort when it worked.

Q: OK. Another situation along the employment lines that you championed, that was really considered an outstanding piece of legislation, was the Emergency Employment Act. I wonder if you could tell us the situation that caused you to work on that?

A: Well, here again when you're the chief executive of a city of a million-two people, more or less at that time, you can see what impacts negatively, what impacts positively. Many people are around that don't have the wherewithal to travel a distance to get a job and need to find something in the area. You need some direction, you need some leadership, you need someone to point to them, you need to talk to potential employers that can cooperate and be able to provide for work. It's an ongoing, constant effort and we were successful for the years that stimulated that the area, and brought this kind of activity, job opportunities to the city of Detroit. Now, we're talking about 2006. And Michigan, as we all know, has just been going through unprecedented unemployment, so the opportunities sway, they go up and down depending upon the economic circumstances. But back then; when I was mayor, we had some problems. We did have some negative economic months, and if you could find someone a job, you would solve the kids' problems, you would solve the housing problems. Just give them a job, and let them have the opportunity to provide for the family and themselves, and life is better and the community is better.

Q: We've talked a bit about some of the problems you encountered a little bit before, the deficit that you

encountered, the crime rate that you encountered. What were the major problems that you faced besides crime and jobs, which are sort of a constant in Detroit?

A: Housing.

Q: Housing.

A: Housing. Let me remind you that before I took office, President Lyndon Johnson with his poverty program was putting people into homes without a down payment, and people that all their life had lived in a rental establishment where someone else was taking care of the house. But the bottom line was, by the time I was mayor, too many people were placed into homes with no down payment, where maybe even the closing costs are paid for by some grant, and we had a number of people that could not maintain a house. They'd live in a home for six or eight months, didn't make the payments, didn't make the repairs, there had to be foreclosures and they had to be evicted, and then, HUD would take over the properties. That's a specific problem that is always with us, a housing problem. We had a housing commission that helped place people in apartments if they were poor, unable to find their own houses, and a full-time working administrative staff that would help people with housing. The question of education was always a part of the people in the community, and as

we've indicated, the mayor then and the mayor now, does not have any direct authority over the education endeavor. But you can persuade, you can talk to, you can cooperate with the board that is in charge of the education and with the superintendent and work cooperatively, but that was always a concern of people way back then. Way back then, 1970, '74. And I had directed a number of presentations and comments and speeches to the educational system to work together to bring about a better quality of education.

Q: I'm trying to get a full picture for whoever reads your oral history on what it was like being mayor during your era. There were the major issues that you have discussed, but I wonder what you consider to be your major accomplishments as mayor of Detroit?

A: I think I brought stability to the city. And, good management. Running a city is, in a sense, running a business where you have to have good personnel and sound budgetary considerations. You have to have adequate resources, money. The bread and butter of running a city is to stop crime, have safe streets, provide lights, pick up the garbage, and have some community facilities such as parks, and all of those require persons of talent and ability. And this whole effort of running this business conducted while you live in a glass house. Everybody

watches because you're a public servant, and they should watch, and everything you try and do is visible and known to the citizens as it should be. It seemed to me that, particularly, since we had those horrendous riots a few years before I became mayor, that the city needed stability and appreciation by the citizens, black and white, that there was a future and the city was viable. I think the city became better in the four years that I was there, in part because we as a team, I mean all of those that were on my team -- the department heads and the assistants -- were very much aware of the fact that we had to always address the question of fairness in terms of hiring blacks and minorities. And, one of the ways to bring about respect for the administration that's running the city is to have department heads that the people can associate with or recognize. That's why, when I first became mayor, I decided that I'm going to find minority administrators and department heads, and appoint them and help stabilize that issue, the racial antagonistic issue that had caused such tremendous damage to the city three years before -- the riots, of course. I started, with making a black man a deputy mayor, I started with a new police commissioner that I brought in as a national figure to bring about sophisticated, educated, professional police officers.

And, among the professionalism that was required, was to incorporate and bring in more black policemen to join the police department, to serve as policemen, so that the community can see a law enforcement officer walking down the street or driving a car that is a minority, and therefore, you build respect for those that represent law and justice. And the head of the Department of Public Works was a black man and so forth. That's one way of having the community respect the administration, respect the people in charge. Another way is to provide those services that they require, the nitty-gritty work, the safe streets, the lights, the sewage, and the water, and the garbage pickup. All of those things have to do with running a good city and making it better than it was last year, and for that you need a lot of people. The city at that time was a million-two in round numbers, there were almost 25,000 employees working for the city of Detroit. When you appoint the head of the police department, he's got to be a professional; he's in charge of 5 or 6,000 people. One of my goals was to raise the number of police officers to provide safety on the streets. And when I took office it was under 5,000, by the time I left office we had almost 6,500 police officers. To get additional police officers you need money, and to get the money, we worked

tremendously hard at the federal and state level to bring revenue sharing to the city of Detroit; sharing with the state, sharing with the federal government. As we've indicated in our discussions before, after about a year and a half of intensive national work, Congress passed the Revenue Sharing Act. The first check to the City of Detroit was about \$55 million that came directly to help with the law enforcement or their other activities.

Q: One of the questions that I think I failed to ask earlier is: did you feel that you were coming into a deeply divided city?

A: It was very obvious. I mean there were -- the riots were devastating, and as a byproduct, the tensions between the races were obvious because of the riots. And, one thing that was very clear to me that there were many good people in the city and, no matter whatever their ethnic or racial background, I tried to express my desires and hopes to them and work with them. And the way to bring social peace on the street, so to speak, is to be able to address their concerns and to do so in a fashion that they'll accept.

Q: Most people, I would think, would be look at the mayor's position following Jerome Cavanagh, and realize that there was a lot of division in the city. I think most people would be scared to death of that issue. You took a big

risk by just running for mayor, let alone winning the election. I wonder -- how did you feel about that issue?

A: Well, it was a job that -- I felt that it was a job that could be done. It required help, sensitivity, and awareness, and that had been one of the things that I constantly was aware of and would address by talking to the communities and their leadership, and the people directly by radio, TV, and press statements. There was a zillion different things that have to be done, but most important, the general attitude is that the citizens have to understand that this is their city, it's in their interest to do A, B, C, and if so, then the leadership must respond appropriately. For example, the crime matter -- you know, everybody wants safe streets. They want to send their kids to the grocery store without being concerned about someone stealing their money or otherwise. And to do that, you have to have a police department that's respected so that the leadership is there, and to do that you have to have citizens that are respectful. And I've always felt that they are respectful, they intend to do the right thing as long as they're given an opportunity to enjoy life and to do what they want to do for their children. That's why there was such an emphasis on bringing persons of the other races, whether it's the Spanish or the black community,

into the running of the city. And with that kind of leadership, then you gain the respect of the citizen on the street. And when you gain their respect, they will not cause trouble, they will help you fight crime, they will call you with suggestions to make their community better, they'll call you and say, "Hey, the light is out, can you fix it?", instead of just letting it go and grumbling and calling it to our attention. They'll call and say -- hoping for some relief -- "You know, my garbage was not picked up -- it was three days late on my block, what's going on?" I want to know about those things so I can direct them to -- explain to them what happened when I find out, and then to correct a situation that's ongoing. Now, this sounds kind of simplistic, but the nitty-gritty is that there are a million two hundred thousand people in this city. That's a lot of people, that's a lot of neighborhoods, that's a lot of problems, that's a lot of communities, and within the community, there are a lot of church groups, homeowners groups, organizations, scouts, sports organizations. I'm not talking about the Tigers and the Lions. They're important, but the sports organizations, the Little Leagues that play in the neighborhood and the parks on Saturday and Sunday and after school to teach the kids to play. They need the grass cut

in the parks, they need the tennis nets to go up in the springtime, and if they're twisted or bent, they'll have to be repaired. All of that is management, all of that is a part of the community that's important. Just a quick aside, why do people move to suburbs? Because they're safe and the schools are quote "better," and they can enjoy the parks and the safety and pleasures of the community whether it's church or school community. There's no reason why that shouldn't be found in the city of Detroit. That was really -- going back to my goal: was it doable? Yes, I think it was doable to bring the races together. Well, you bring the races together by putting responsible persons in charge of a 2,000 person department or a 5,000, 6,000 police department, by responsible leadership that the average citizen can identify and support. There are certain things that will always occur. The paper this morning had a report about crime in Detroit that is still a serious problem. Crime will always be with us, but you can control it to a certain extent. You can minimize the negative aspect; the pain to the people that are the victims, and that takes a constant effort. Can you improve things? I think we did. We stabilized the city financially, and that was my goal. We were able to introduce black leadership into responsible positions.

In '69, during the summer, there were eight or ten candidates running for mayor, and of course, in the primary, the two top vote getters run off in November. Well, Dick Austin, one of the top vote getters was a black man. It turned out that he was a very good black man, and tempered, and not inclined to use what we call nowadays the 'race card.' He was a very able guy. We had a nice campaign on the issues, what's best for the city, and I barely edged him out. Austin did go on to become a distinguished Secretary of State of Michigan for many, many years. We had a good relationship, and I think because he was talented, that the campaign did not aggravate the race issues. It was better as a result of whites seeing what he could say and blacks seeing what I could say, and we had a good race. After that, it was my responsibility to come up with four years of making things better in the city, and it needed help. You need a lot of help from good people and I was very fortunate in getting a good fiscal officer, getting a good police chief, getting a good lawyer in Mike Glusak. As you may recall, I had Pat Murphy as the Chief of Police and he was so good when he agreed to come to Detroit. He was so good that, about a year into the job, Mayor Lindsay of New York needed a new commissioner he went

to New York City where he was in charge of 25,000 police instead of 5 or 6,000. He was that good.

Q: As you say, as mayor, you lived in a glass house, and the second you become mayor, you moved into that glass house. Who were your prime supporters in terms of individuals and in terms of groups while you were mayor?

A: That's a very difficult question to answer because the job is so broad and so vast. In the business community, my old boss, Jimmy Wineman, for example, was instrumental in inviting me to speak to business leadership. In the labor area, a number of the UAW people that I knew like Doug Fraser, and the AFL-CIO president, Bill Marshall, were friends of mine. Bill was an important connection to labor and our -- I'd have to look and remind myself of countless people. In law enforcement, it was the police department unions that liked what I would do, and they supported me as a group. In the social arena, boy, there's just countless kind of persons that were helpful in running the welfare department, running the housing department, helping me. In the legislative or the inter-governmental responsibilities, it turned out that while I was mayor we had a very understanding and cooperative governor, William Milliken. My background was Democrat. I was elected as a Democrat to sheriff of Wayne County, but when you run for mayor you run

as a nonpartisan, so partisanship is not openly discussed, Republican or Democrat. So both myself and any opponents had to run on a nonpartisan label, but everybody knew that my orientation was with the Democratic Party. Milliken was a Republican, but it was as though we'd worked together for years. He was cooperative, he was understanding. If we had a good program and asked for his help, he would help. If it was a program that he thought maybe wasn't as good, then if he had any objection, he would say so. One thing that's important in any business, but particularly in the public arena, you have to be able to deal with other leadership that are direct and straightforward and not wishy-washy. That is to say, there's nothing worse than talking to a legislator or another executive of another community that says, "OK, I'll help you and I'll join you," and then it turns out, he speaks with a forked tongue. You got to rely on what a person says, either he agrees or disagrees. I admire that. And Milliken was that kind of governor. If you're dealing with the Congressmen or the Senators that represent the state, or parts of the state, you'll have to rely upon their good judgment to help bring about a change, the help that you need. I'm reminded of Martha Griffiths. Martha Griffiths was a diehard Democrat. Very, very outspoken, very popular, and an effective

Congresswoman. At the time, she was fighting with President Nixon on many of their programs because he was cutting back on grants to the communities, to the cities, when we were trying to promote straight revenue sharing. I spoke with her directly. She said, "Well, OK." I think if you get revenue sharing you'll get some money and you can be able to do the things you want to do with the city. She says, "I'll help you." She was on the Ways and Means Committee of Congress, the Congresswoman from the 17th District that I lived in. But she was very anti-Nixon in many programs. But she says, "All right, I'll support his bill of revenue sharing if it means that much to you," and she did. That bill passed and we got the \$50+ million the first year and years after that. It takes that kind of leadership. So, it's awfully hard to fix who's most instrumental. It's so vast, so complex that -- there's a lot of people.

Q: Well, let me ask the other side of the coin. Living in the glass house, of course, you had detractors. Are there any major detractors that you had to deal with that were, quite frankly, a thorn in your side?

A: Yes, it is (laughter) true, yes, but I don't think that we need to pinpoint all of them or discuss them because it's been a number of years. There are a few. For example, I'd

say I had some round robin fights with Mel Ravitz. Mel was a council president. And we had some differences, but by and large, ultimately, we got along enough that the city benefited by it. But, he had some different ideas, very different from mine. There were other community leaders, what I would call rabble-rousers, without specifically naming the groups that were raising Cain and marching with anti-this program or the other. You had to tolerate them and rebuff any of their criticisms to the extent that you could, and let the public decide. And that's really what happens in the glass house. There's always somebody that, for whatever motive --and I'm not saying it's bad - had a different approach to a given problem. Here's how to solve the housing problem. Here's how to solve the crime problem. That kind of thing. In a democracy, you talk it out, you weigh it, and you make your best judgment. And if you're in charge as an executive, and the mayor is the CEO of the city of Detroit, you say this is the way we're going to go, and you issue the directions. And if your program works, you're successful. If it doesn't, you shift gears and try something else.

Q: Because on the surface, and this is strictly on the surface, one of the common perceptions among citizens in the whole region -- because although Detroit is a separate

entity -- there are about 128 separate communities in this region -- everyone looks to Detroit as the centerpiece. The perception was, well, you were the white candidate and the white vote went to you and the African-American vote went to Richard Austin, and there was a pretty distinct divide. And yet, from our previous conversations that doesn't seem to be the case.

A: Well, percentage-wise, it is the case. But I had substantial support in the black community. And as a matter of fact, when I was elected, the good citizens looked at me and made a fair assessment. And so it wasn't all white and all black in terms of the community voting for a black candidate or white candidate. And that's the reason I was elected. Because, you see, the other side -- in the black community you always kind of think of Democrat and social work and union activities, and Jerry Cavanagh had established a rapport with that segment of the community. And, when we had the campaign, there was a lot of white, dedicated public servants, or those who were writers or educators, or community activists, that were white. And their attack was, "OK, Gribbs, you're a nice guy." If they said that, or maybe said, "You're not a nice guy, but we're supporting Austin because he's black, he's a good guy, he's a CPA, experienced, he's black, and it's

time to have a black mayor." So that was a realistic assessment by a number of whites looking just at the race as we're discussing this point. So there was a large segment of the white community that was supporting Austin, and sending him money and talking on his behalf. So I had to have a substantial portion of the black community vote for me to countermand the percentage of whites that were supporting Austin. Before I decided not to run for a second term, I had a survey made a year earlier, just to find out if I ran again, could I win? And the results were rather gratifying, and I particularly remember that the substantial numbers of the black community that said, "Yes, I'd vote for Gribbs again, if he runs a year or six months from now." So I had accomplished that aspect of it, to win the support of the responsible members of minorities. And that was gratifying. I finally decided for other reasons to go back to the legal profession. So, I decided not to run again, and I made the announcement a year early, in December of '72, that I was not going to run for mayor again. And a number of my friends said, "Hey, you can't announce that so early because you lose all of your power. You lose all your support. Everybody's going to run in different directions and will not support you in your programs." And I thought, well, for a number of reasons I

wanted to -- I was determined I was not going to run again and go back into the legal profession as my profession. And it would give my department heads an opportunity to work, to inquire about other responsibilities. It would give good candidates an opportunity to develop a program and a campaign without supporting me or expecting me to run again, and it would give the city a long period of time to review what should happen and what we've done. And you know, in the final analysis there's nothing as lame as a lame duck. You do lose your authority, but I took steps to make sure that all my department heads, while they remained department heads, were towing the line and were doing the job, and they did. But I must quickly add that it gave a lot of my great department people an opportunity to look at other positions, and they went on to other careers and I'm glad it worked out that way because I had a lot of dedicated people that helped me out, helped me run the city.

Q: Did you get the feeling you were a transitional mayor in the sense that you are the last of the white mayors, and was it time for an African-American mayor?

A: Well, it could be. I mean, historically, it's hard to argue with that kind of commentary (laughter).

Q: Sure, I have, you know, 20/20 vision in hindsight.

A: I never envisioned myself to be a transitional at the time. I always thought that we'd have some white mayors down the pike even if my successor was black. And, of course, as you know -- maybe we should note that John Nichols was the nominee, and Coleman Young was the nominee for mayor to succeed me. Coleman was a state Senator at the time and Nichols was my police commissioner. And the race was fairly close, but Coleman had won, and then stayed on for 20 years. And unfortunately a lot of things transpired in those 20 years. Then, of course, we've had eight years of Dennis Archer as mayor. So, time has passed, and unfortunately, the city population has continued to go downhill and it still has the social problems that they did have before. But it's surviving. There's promise even as we speak that things are picking up, even though economic times are bad, but things are picking up in the city in many respects. Crime is still a problem; education is still a problem. Economically, the city is beginning to turn around. Downtown -- when I became mayor, I spoke to Detroit Renaissance, with support of the executives pulled together by Dwight Havens, who was president of the Chamber of Commerce. And one of the members of the board [of Detroit Renaissance] was Henry Ford II, along with the CEOs of all of the major corporations. When I pointed out that

we had this wonderful piece of property right outside my window in the mayor's office between Jefferson and the river, he then took the information as to the availability of the property to Atlanta architect Portman. Ford then announced a new major building in Detroit. The building of what it was ultimately called, Detroit Renaissance Center. I figured that something significant should happen with that piece of property. The popular feeling was Detroit is dead, downtown is dying. I talked frequently about something to revive not only the economics, but also the concept for the city. And Henry Ford II just stepped right in there with his support of and concept of Detroit Renaissance, and by putting money into it. When it was first announced the plan was to build a center hotel and office buildings, a complex that would be anywhere from 350 to \$380 million. It turns out it cost about \$420 million ultimately, but that was the sparkplug to renew downtown Detroit. Now that's 30 years ago, it's still there and it's had some economic problems, but as we speak, portions of downtown that had been dragging along as parking lots, now house the Detroit Tigers' new stadium, the Lions' new stadium, and a couple of new office buildings. It takes more than five or ten or 15 years. Sometimes it takes 30 or 40, but Detroit is being rebuilt in the downtown area.

The community has its problems, and I can't address that because I don't know enough about neighborhoods, and as you drive through the city, there are still a lot of areas that need rehab and need new housing. Hopefully it'll follow from the renewal of downtown.

Q: So, you passed the keys to the city, so to speak, to Mayor Coleman Young, one of the most famous mayors in the history of Detroit. What was your impression of Coleman Young, and did he consult with you at all as a former mayor?

A: Oh, yes. After the election, there were a lot of things we talked about. I wanted to make him specifically aware of the nitty-gritty, our departmental concerns and problems, and promises, and goals and so forth. And so, we had a fine working relationship. I remember shortly after the election, one of the Detroit police officers was killed on duty. And I said to him, "Why don't you join me, let's go to the funeral together." And we did, and I drove him in our vehicle and we both -- I spoke at the church services and he was there all the time, we went to the cemetery together. And it was obvious -- the pictures and the press and the TV indicated that it was a turnover, and an appropriate turnover of the city administration. The man killed on duty happened to be a white police officer, and it was good for the black mayor to go to the funeral of a

white police officer. I thought this was significant in that the white members of Detroit now have to understand that whatever the color, here's this black man, he can run the city, he's going to run the city, he can represent you, too, and will be sensitive to your needs, and that kind of activity. After you leave the office, things change a little bit. From time to time we'd meet socially and we'd kibbitz, but then I went into the legal field and was busy and became a judge, and he went his way, I kind of went my way.

Q: What was your impression of Coleman Young?

A: Well, he was good for a while, but I thought that he could have done a better job in terms of working with suburban communities and working with -- he did not deal with racial matters as much as I thought he could have or would have. In that I mean, the city was difficult to run and he'd had some crime problems of his own, he had some little uproars in the communities that threatened to have disrupting kind of riots. He was able to handle that appropriately. I just think he had a first couple of terms where he did very well. After a while, I think it wears on you, and you're not as sharp as you could be, so I think his last two terms were not as good as the first three; I'll just put it that way.

Q: Would you favor term limits? The thought just occurred to me.

A: No, I don't. It's a good concept, but I think term limits is working to the disadvantage of the citizens of Michigan. We have term limits in House, and there are term limits in the state Senate. In the state Senate, you can serve for eight years, in the House you can serve for six years. I think that qualified people that could be elected are not there. One of the best state representatives during my time was a fellow named Bill Ryan from the East side. He was elected regularly. He had a great sense of history. He was a competent representative, conscientious, with integrity, honesty, far-sightedness. He also brought institutional memory to that body. If you're going to be a state representative, it takes a couple years to learn your ropes, really -- how bureaucracy works and how do you get legislation passed and how do you amend it, and how do you get support. I think if you're going to have term limits, they've got to be a lot longer. First of all, I don't think you need it. If you're going to have term limits, however, it ought to be a lot longer than the six years and the eight years. On the other hand, when you look at the President of the United States, I think there was no term limit on the president, and Roosevelt, I think he stayed

because of the war, but he stayed one term too long. He had three terms plus the fourth in which he died. Talk about awesome responsibility. That's just a killing job. So I think it's good that we have term limits on the President. But as far as legislators are concerned, I think they're way too short. Governors now have two terms. I don't have a strong feeling as far as governor is concerned.

Q: I want to ask one last question for this section, regarding being mayor of Detroit. So, I know there's no such thing as a typical day for the mayor, but if you could tell us, generally speaking, what a typical day was for you as mayor? This has been asked of other mayors, there was even a piece on Jerome Cavanagh in *Look Magazine* where they ran through his typical day. Again, I realize there's probably no such thing, but I wondered if you had a rendition you could give us?

A: Well, I start with the comment, "It's always busy." There are always people who want to see you, for good reason, in the office. What I really remember is that when I'd drive to the office from my home --

Q: What time did you get at the office?

A: I didn't like morning meetings. So I used to get to the office by 8:30. Every once in awhile, we'd have a

breakfast meeting and I'd have to get there at 7 or 7:30. And I would stay -- I'm not a morning person, I'm a night person -- I would stay up 'til midnight and get up at seven: that was my preference. But at any rate, I'd shoot for 8:30. I'd be able to read the paper, or I'd grab the telephone and I'd talk to my press secretary -- "What's happened overnight that I don't know about or I haven't read about?" And, then you'd get to the office and there would be either a problem, or a dignitary coming in, an important person that you should greet and introduce to the press, whether it's an ambassador that's visiting the city, or a public official. John Lindsay was running for President my last year in office. So, he would visit Detroit and I would welcome him and help him to speak to the press. Maybe the Congress passed an act or the state legislature passed an act and I would have the person that sponsored that -- if it was helpful to the city -- I'd publicly greet him and thank him. Besides looking at reports from department heads in the morning, I'd maybe deal with a specific problem that the police commissioner would have. Inevitably, I'd have lunch with someone, or there would be a meeting of the Economic Club might have a lunch and I would go there and have greetings or comments, or I'd meet in the conference room with a team of my

department heads, maybe the budget people, and have a run-through on what was coming up next year. And in the afternoon again, inevitably, you would have several appointments -- which takes me to the evenings. I established a rule with my staff that I don't want to be away from home more than three nights a week. Well, that was a goal that rarely worked out. But that was the goal so I'd have some time to spend with my five children, and spend at home. At least, dinner at home three times a week. Sometimes it would work, but on occasions, such as over the Fourth of July week, when we have celebrations, I'd be out every night at one function or another. And when you have thousands of organizations, hundreds of churches that have a meeting, they want to mayor to come -- political organizations, unions that have meetings -- they would like the mayor to come and speak to them. There's just countless -- one time we looked at the invitations. I could attend five meetings a night every night of the week and still not satisfy all the requests. But that's what it entails in a community the size of Detroit. So, I would look at the events and the invitations and take those that I should attend, and then my number one substitute was Walter Green, the deputy mayor. And the phrase came out that I would hear later on, "Hey, Green is here. Gribbs

ain't coming" (laughter), that kind of thing. And I engaged other department heads to speak on behalf of the city. I had a staff of a half a dozen, and they were in my office. And frequently, I'd have them represent and give an award, if you will, or a plaque, or speak on city problems of specific kinds that were inquired about by the organizations. It's a full-time job. Obviously, (laughter) night and day. That's kind of the standard with some exceptions. The exceptions are when you'd have to go to Washington to testify before your Congressional committees or meet with national organizations, or go to Lansing for the same type of meeting. I made a point of doing both because it was important. It was important that the officials in Lansing, the governor and the legislature, knew what was happening in Detroit and what our needs were, what our successes were, and likewise in Washington. That's why I was on the board of the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and I ended up being the president of the National League of Cities in the last year that I was mayor. And that was a compliment, and it was a responsibility and it gave me an opportunity to sit next to the President in the cabinet room, much like the Secretary of State does when they're at a formal meeting, and speak on behalf of the cities of the nation

and our needs. That's why those positions were important
and in the best interest in the city of Detroit.