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Alan Sieroty:
Alan Sieroty: California Coastal Commission Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Todd Holmes
in 2017

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Alan Sieroty, 2016
Photo Courtesy of Alan Sieroty

The California Coastal Commission Project is a collaborative work between the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley and the Bill Lane Center for the American West at Stanford University. The Bill Lane Center initiated a research project on the Coastal Commission in 2013, seeking to examine the history and operation of the state agency that over the last 40 years has stood as the international flagship of coastal regulation. Todd Holmes served as the lead historian on that project, and developed it into a collaborative venture when he joined the Oral History Center in 2016. This oral history is the product of that joint project, which was made possible by generous financial support of the Bill Lane Center.

Alan Sieroty is a former State Assemblyman and Senator from Los Angeles, California. A graduate from Stanford University and USC School of Law, he served in the State Assembly from 1967 to 1977, and the State Senate from 1977 to 1982. In the Assembly, he was one of the original authors of the coastal legislation that would create the California Coastal Commission under Proposition 20 in 1972. Currently, he is chairman of the Sieroty Company in Los Angeles.

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Interview 1: June 26, 2017

01-00:00:05

Holmes:

This is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. I am sitting down with Alan [G.] Sieroty for the California Coastal Commission Oral History Project. Today's date is June 26, 2017, and we are here at his office in the beautiful city of Los Angeles. Alan, thanks so much for taking the time to sit down with me today.

01-00:00:34

Sieroty:

Thank you.

01-00:00:36

Holmes:

We are going to talk a lot about various aspects dealing with the Coastal Commission and other relevant topics, but I thought we would start with a little background about yourself. You grew up here in Los Angeles—is that correct?

01-00:00:53

Sieroty:

That's correct.

01-00:00:55

Holmes:

And you went to Stanford [University].

01-00:00:59

Sieroty:

Yes.

01-00:00:59

Holmes:

And what did you major in there at Stanford?

01-00:01:02

Sieroty:

Economics.

01-00:01:03

Holmes:

And you graduated in 1952? Is that correct?

01-00:01:09

Sieroty:

1952, yes.

01-00:01:13

Holmes:

And then you pursued a law degree here in Los Angeles, at USC [University of Southern California]?

01-00:01:18

Sieroty:

Yes.

01-00:01:19

Holmes:

What was the focus of the law that you were interested in?

01-00:01:23

Sieroty:

I had no focus. I went to law school because my dad [Julian M. Sieroty] wanted me to go to law school after I had graduated, and I didn't know what

to do. So I went to law school. I graduated in 1956 and then I went into our business, which was in the real estate business. So I wrote leases and things like that, and handled some real estate law.

01-00:02:06

Holmes:

You started actually doing some work in the government, I believe, in 1961, as the executive secretary for Lieutenant Governor Glenn [Malcolm] Anderson.

01-00:02:16

Sieroty:

Well, I was his administrative assistant first. Yes.

01-00:02:20

Holmes:

How did you come by this opportunity? Did you always kind of envision maybe stepping into political work and government service?

01-00:02:30

Sieroty:

It's a long story. My mother [Jean Sieroty] ran for the Beverly Hills School Board when I was a youngster, and she lost miserably in that election. But she was always interested in politics. My sister and I, over the dinner table with my dad and mother, we would always discuss and argue about political things. It was part of my growing up. I can remember my mother had an event for Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt in 1944 or one of those—either 1940 or 1944, and my sister and I at that time were for Wendell [Lewis] Willkie. So we went outside and had signs there for Wendell Willkie, and people came in to talk about Roosevelt. So we had a very early exposure to political things, so that when I later became active, politics was just part of my life.

01-00:03:54

Holmes:

What lessons did you learn from that experience with Glenn Anderson? I mean, that was your first real exposure to Sacramento [California], to state government.

01-00:04:08

Sieroty:

The reason I went to work for Glenn Anderson was that I had been active in the Democratic Club movement in California, which was very important in those days. In 1958, the theory was that Democrats would sweep the state in '58, and Pat [Edmund Gerald] Brown [Sr.] was our leader in those days. I was active in the Beverly Hills Democratic Club. In 1960, I was president of the Beverly Hills Democratic Club, and [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy was the Democratic nominee, and his brother [Robert Francis Kennedy] was in charge of California. We had him over at my mother's and father's house speaking to a group of people.

So I was involved in political things for many years before I went to work for Glenn Anderson. But the reason I went to work for Glenn Anderson is because Don Rose, who was then—I don't know if he was Secretary of State at that time, or just active in the political world—because I was active in the Los Angeles Democratic party, he knew of me, and he suggested that I was

one of the people that Glenn Anderson ought to talk with when he was looking for somebody for a position there. So I went to Sacramento because I thought it would be a good experience.

01-00:00:18

Holmes:

Well, and it seems like, too, your trajectory there is similar to many others—working up the ranks within the Democratic Clubs, and then being tapped to work on staff in Sacramento.

01-00:06:32

Sieroty:

Yeah. But at that time, I didn't want to run. I really had no interest in running for office. I was scared to run for office. I mean, that exposure was frightening to me.

01-00:06:47

Holmes:

That's an interesting point, because now, cutting your teeth and working in politics, you can actually see what the toll of a campaign actually can do, for both the candidate and others.

[Break in Audio]

01-00:07:09

Holmes:

What was your impression of Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy when he came over?

01-00:07:13

Sieroty:

Well, what had happened was that we had a party for Ted [Edward Moore] Kennedy, and we raised about \$3,500. So Ted Kennedy, his brother came over, Bobby Kennedy came over, to pick up the money; this was in the evening of that day. We gave him the money, and later, he came back; he said he lost the money. I don't know how he lost it, but he lost the money. So we had to give him another check.

That was my only experience with him, so you can understand that he wasn't a great statesman at that time. He was a brother of the guy who was running for president, and the brother of the guy who was our speaker at the party. But it was kind of fun meeting the Kennedys at that time.

01-00:08:26

Holmes:

Yes, and especially by 1960, a lot of people said that the Bobby Kennedy that everyone saw by 1968 was much different than the Bobby Kennedy by 1960.

01-00:08:34

Sieroty:

That's right.

01-00:08:37

Holmes:

And you also became deputy director of the Chile-California Program. Tell us a little bit about that. It's actually a very important, yet little-known program between Chile and California.

01-00:08:52

Sieroty:

Well, I had worked for Glenn Anderson for four years, and I guess I was getting a little bit tired of the job or something; I don't know what happened. But he arranged for me to have a position with Pat Brown. Pat Brown was in charge of that operation. And so I became the deputy director of the Chile-California Program, which was a very interesting program, actually. I was only there for a year, but what we did was to send mostly people from the University of California down to Chile, and to work with Chileans—we had several programs going on—in economic development. The Californians were there to help Chileans in their work, and I was able to go to Chile for about—I think I was down there for two or three weeks. I don't remember now, but it was a marvelous experience for me. When Chileans came to California, which many of them did to understand our economic system here, I took them around California and that kind of thing.

01-00:10:15

Holmes:

Agriculture is usually discussed, because in that program, it's the same climate, yet just mirroring in regards to seasons.

01-00:10:24

Sieroty:

That's right. Exactly.

01-00:10:25

Holmes:

A lot of growers wanted to not just go down there and discuss new techniques and everything of what worked in California, but some also looked at it as a great place to buy a plot of land, where you could grow grapes in California through that season, and come back down here and grow grapes through the winter. Did you see a lot of that? I know there were other issues just outside of just agriculture.

01-00:10:56

Sieroty:

I didn't see that at that time. No, I didn't.

01-00:10:59

Holmes:

But it wasn't just agriculture.

01-00:11:01

Sieroty:

Oh, no.

01-00:11:01

Holmes:

There were also other issues.

01-00:11:01

Sieroty:

There were other programs, too. There were several programs. But agriculture was our largest program.

01-00:11:06

Holmes:

We forget that today, but agriculture was the number one industry in California during this time.

You were saying that you didn't want to run for office, but you ended up running in 1966. Discuss that a little bit. How did you come to that decision?

01-00:11:28

Sieroty:

Well I'll tell you about that, because it is a very personal thing with me. I don't know if anyone else has had this kind of experience. I don't remember now what year it was, but Tony [Anthony] Beilenson was my partner at the Beverly Hills Democratic Club. I was president first, then he became president after me. We were very close friends. When Tom [Thomas] Rees, who was then the state assemblyman, decided to run for the state senate, he asked me whether I'd like to run for the state assembly, to take his seat. I said, "No, let Tony run," because Tony really wanted to run, and I didn't want to run. So I said, "Let's let Tony run."

Tony ran, and he won, and four years later, there was an opportunity for him to go to the state senate. So he called me and told me there was this opportunity. Well, during the prior four years, I kind of thought, well, gee, maybe I should have run for the state assembly, because I began to think, well, maybe I could do this work. And so when the chance came again, I said to myself, look, I can't just say no, because I will always regret that. I have got to do this, just for my own development. It wasn't that I thought I was going to be a great assemblyman or anything; it just was one of those things that I felt if I don't run for this, I'll never be able to move again. You know what I mean? It was a very personal thing. So I said, "Okay, I'll run." And luckily, I won.

01-00:13:27

Holmes:

What were some of the issues that you were running on during that time, if you remember that first campaign?

01-00:13:30

Sieroty:

The death penalty was a big issue for me. It still is. I wanted to eliminate the death penalty. If people asked me what I want to do, I said that's what I'd like to try to do. When I was in the state assembly, I did introduce a bill to eliminate the death penalty. One year, I was the lead author of it, and we had hearings and all that, but naturally, it never happened—it will. It will happen. Maybe the next time it has an opportunity.

While I am talking about that, let me just mention to you—because I think the most important change that has occurred with relation to the death penalty is the work that is being done on the East Coast to help inmates who have been convicted to get released because of the trial—maybe they were innocent. There have been innocent people convicted. People are beginning to realize this, and they realize that it's not a perfect system, and we could very well eliminate people who are innocent. So I think people are beginning to see that this is an important issue.

01-00:15:11

Holmes:

Well, and especially if you think of 1966, the race relations, right? There was racism—depending where you were at in the United States, depending on the state—that there were a lot of people of color who were wrongly convicted because a jury was not going to see past the color of their skin in many respects.

01-00:15:36

Sieroty:

That's right. And also, you have very ambitious district attorneys who are trying to make a name for themselves and keep their record pure, and all that. So it's not a system that guarantees accuracy.

01-00:15:55

Holmes:

Yes. Well, you did win, and it's really interesting when we look at that 1966 election year, because some notable company came with you into the legislature. Willie Brown also won, I believe in 1966.

01-00:16:13

Sieroty:

No, no. Willie Brown was elected two years before that.

01-00:16:17

Holmes:

Oh, that's right—he was elected in 1964.

01-00:16:19

Sieroty:

Yeah.

01-00:16:21

Holmes:

John Burton came to the assembly in '64 as well.

01-00:16:24

Sieroty:

I think so.

01-00:16:27

Holmes:

In 1966 you had March Fong Eu, and Yvonne [Brathwaite] Burke—

01-00:16:34

Sieroty:

Yvonne Brathwaite at that time.

01-00:16:36

Holmes:

Yes, it was Brathwaite Burke later. So you have two women of color who also come into the state assembly. I think there were now three women. To think of how things have changed, in 1967, there were three women, I believe, in the legislature at that time.

01-00:16:53

Sieroty:

In the state assembly, yeah. And I don't think there were any women in the state senate.

- 01-00:16:58
Holmes: I think you are right, yeah. And then also, you had notables as well such as Jess Unruh, Leo McCarthy, Randolph Collier. Especially if we think of Unruh and Collier, these guys became giants within the state government.
- 01-00:17:19
Sieroty: They were.
- 01-00:17:21
Holmes: What was your impression of both of them?
- 01-00:17:23
Sieroty: [laughs] Oh—Well, Unruh supported somebody else running against me when I ran for the state assembly, so I thought of him as kind of, oh, not a dictator type, but pretty strong guy who wanted to run the state legislature—or the state assembly, anyway—pretty much on his own. So I was not a supporter of Jess Unruh, but when I got elected, he assured me that he was going to help me, and that whatever problems we had were over. Ultimately, I became a very strong supporter of his. It's funny how those things happen.
- 01-00:18:20
Holmes: It's the game of politics. That's just kind of how—
- 01-00:18:22
Sieroty: It's kind of funny.
- 01-00:18:28
Holmes: When we think of, in quotes, “political machines” within California, you had the Burton machine coming out of San Francisco, which is Willie Brown and later Dianne Feinstein, Nancy Pelosi were also eventually part of this.
- 01-00:18:47
Sieroty: Well, Phil Burton, who became a congressman, was really the leader of that machine. McCarthy was on the other side. They were fighting among themselves.
- 01-00:19:06
Holmes: Yes, and then Jess Unruh controlled—or at least had a very heavy hand within—Southern California.
- 01-00:19:13
Sieroty: Right.
- 01-00:19:16
Holmes: What were your thoughts of Randy Collier? This was somebody, I think, had extensive tenure in the legislature.
- 01-00:19:22
Sieroty: I had very little to do with Randy Collier.

01-00:19:24

Holmes: Because he was in the senate?

01-00:19:25

Sieroty: He was a senator, and I didn't want to mess with him.

01-00:19:31

Holmes: He was in the legislature—was it—for nearly 40 years or more?

01-00:19:36

Sieroty: Was he? I don't remember how long.

01-00:19:39

Holmes: He was from the North Coast, and Collier was known to sit on every—what they called “juice committees”; that he controlled most of the money and lobbying that would come out of those committees. Was that what you were saying, in the sense, he had high stature and power within the legislature.

01-00:20:02

Sieroty: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

01-00:20:06

Holmes: Well, we are here to talk about the Coastal Commission, but actually, before we do, I also wanted to ask—while we are still on the topic of the 1966 campaign—I know you were running your own campaign during this same year, but what were your thoughts of the [Ronald Wilson] Reagan and Pat Brown campaign for governor in 1966?

01-00:20:29

Sieroty: Well, of course, I wanted to see Pat Brown win. I really don't remember too much about the campaign at that time. I can't remember too much about it. I guess I was disappointed when Pat Brown didn't win, but third terms were difficult in California.

01-00:21:02

Holmes: Well, there is a time in California political history where even a second term was even difficult for a governor.

01-00:21:08

Sieroty: That's right.

01-00:21:10

Holmes: Before Jerry Brown, Earl Warren was the only one who—at least—and I think Earl Warren still holds it; was the only one who was elected three consecutive terms.

01-00:21:08

Sieroty: Right.

01-00:21:22

Holmes: There was a lot of talk among some that that was the mistake; that Jess Unruh really wanted to run in 1966 instead of Pat Brown.

01-00:21:35

Sieroty: Well, he ran, I think, the next term. And he lost, of course.

01-00:21:41

Holmes: In regards to third terms, if Pat would have stepped aside—

01-00:21:46

Sieroty: Yeah, I think Jess would have liked to have run.

01-00:21:50

Holmes: What do you think his chances would have been?

01-00:21:52

Sieroty: He probably would have lost.

01-00:21:56

Holmes: Yeah. Reagan was a formidable candidate, particularly in 1966.

01-00:21:59

Sieroty: Well, Jess Unruh had a very bad reputation as a kind of boss. People don't respond positively to that in terms of an election. Whereas Reagan was smooth, a movie star, all that kind of thing, he was a kind of a beloved character.

01-00:22:25

Holmes: And you see when Jess Unruh runs in 1970, he tries very hard to shed the "Big Daddy" kind of image, and that still proved very, very difficult for him to do.

01-00:22:38

Sieroty: Yeah.

01-00:22:42

Holmes: I wanted to talk a little bit, as we are moving now here to the Coastal Commission, about BCDC, the [San Francisco] Bay Conservation and Development Commission. This started a little bit before you came to Sacramento. This is the McAteer and Petris Act of 1965. Many have noted that this was really a big first step in regards to environmental legislation, and also a big political step: that there really was not much movement politically in regards to the environment. What are your thoughts about BCDC? Do you think this was a big political step?

01-00:23:27

Sieroty: Yes and no. I want to clarify this, because this is important. BCDC had nothing to do with what we did for the coast, in one way. In terms of the effort that we did to establish the Coastal Commission, I didn't even know very much about BCDC. It had been passed—the legislation had been passed—I

think before I got into the legislature, and, of course, I knew Nick [Nicholas C.] Petris and Alan Short. But in terms of what it was, I really didn't have very much understanding of it, and I didn't think about it in terms of what we were doing on the Coastal Commission. So I have to tell you kind of the history of how it happened. Legislation happens for different reasons, and there are a lot of personal things that go into this thing that no one knows about. So that's why I'm kind of telling you about this.

01-00:24:49

Holmes:

There are some who have said BCDC was the model for the Coastal Commission.

01-00:24:58

Sieroty:

No! BCDC was not the model for it. I want to clarify that, because this is important. It's important to me to try to give you the history of what happened.

John [F.] Dunlap was a state legislator, state assemblyman. He was elected at the same time I was, and we were very good friends because we had been active in the Democratic Party before. He represented the Napa/Sonoma area. There was—I can't remember his name at the moment; John Dunlap, if you talk with him, he'll tell you the guy's name. My recognition of names now is not good. But anyway, the guy who was active in Sonoma County was trying to raise the issue that a development along the Sonoma coast was not a good idea because it was cutting off ten miles of highway frontage to the public. You could not enter this development.

01-00:26:45

Holmes:

And this was Sea Ranch?

01-00:26:47

Sieroty:

Sea Ranch. A beautiful development proposed, but it was going to eliminate the public's right to go into that area to go to the beaches. He was opposed to that. He was just a citizen of the Sonoma County area, and he was upset about that. So he talked to John Dunlap, who was a state assemblyman, and John Dunlap and I had been working together on legislation. John Dunlap was talking to me about it, and I said, "Well, we ought to do something about it." We talked to Ed [Edwin L.] Z'berg. Ed Z'berg was the chairman of the assembly natural resources committee. Ed said, "Okay. Let's go over there and see what it is. What's all this about?" He liked to fly, so he took us on this rented plane, of course, and we flew over there one day to see what was going on. We said, "Well, we have to do something about this."

It was my turn to introduce a bill, because John Dunlap and I took turns—one day, he would introduce a bill and I would be co-author, and the next time, I would introduce a bill and he would be co-author, and so forth. It was my turn to introduce a bill, so I introduced a bill to do something about that ten miles

of freeway access to the public land, to the ocean. And we didn't get anywhere with it.

01-00:28:33

Holmes: Was this the first legislation in 1970?

01-00:28:37

Sieroty: I don't remember now what the year was. We were elected in 1966, so our first year up there would have been '67.

01-00:28:46

Holmes: Maybe around '69?

01-00:28:49

Sieroty: I'm not sure. It took us three years of the actual coastal legislation, and I'll tell you how we got to that. But the first bill we put in was my bill having to do with that ten miles, and it didn't get anywhere. So the next year, we tried again. I don't remember now exactly how it happened, but one of the important people in this whole process was Ellen Stern Harris. Does that name mean anything to you?

01-00:29:36

Holmes: Oh, yeah.

01-00:29:37

Sieroty: Okay. Ellen Stern's mother was a very close friend of my mother, and lived in Beverly Hills. Ellen was a good friend of mine, and so I told her about this, and she said, "Well, you know what you ought to do? You ought to do something for the entire coast." I had never thought about that.

01-00:30:03

Holmes: Well, she is often called "the mother of the Coastal Act."

01-00:30:06

Sieroty: She is. She is. And that was it. I was so surprised. Sometimes a concept you don't think about, but it's so obvious, but no one had ever mentioned it to me. This had nothing to do with the [San Francisco] Bay Area thing. This was entirely differently.

Now, so what did we have to do? Well, we started thinking about it and trying to work out a system. How do you protect the entire coast of California? A thousand miles of coastal area? It took several years to try to get this into a position where it made some sense. At first, we had a very large commission, so many people on it, well, that became unworkable, in our thinking. So we had to try to narrow it down. We had to go through a whole process. But I want you to get the idea that it was Ellen Harris who suggested this idea. At that time, I was not thinking about the Bay Area at all.

01-00:31:27

Holmes:

She was, as you said, a resident here of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, and she had worked on conservation efforts dealing, I believe, with the Santa Monica Mountains, clean water. In her retelling, it was in 1968, driving along Malibu that, for her, the concept started to click that we need to do something about the coast. Did she ever tell you that story?

01-00:32:03

Sieroty:

No.

01-00:32:05

Holmes:

That's where she said, later on, she started to get the idea of we should really do something here. And then, of course, her later conversations with you helped put that into action, I guess.

01-00:32:18

Sieroty:

Well, she later became the vice chairman of the first commission that was established. I think she was pleased with that. But it was her idea, to me, that got me into the thinking of the entire California coast. And I say this because the impact of the California Coastal Commission has been felt all over the world. People now in all these countries are thinking about doing something about their coastal areas—Peter [M.] Douglas was involved in going around to many countries. He went to China, he went to Israel; he went to many countries that began thinking about doing something about their coastal areas. I mean, there is a history to this. I think it's really important.

01-00:33:21

Holmes:

I had in my records that you proposed that legislation three times. Is that correct?

01-00:33:33

Sieroty:

Yes.

01-00:33:33

Holmes:

Trying to get it passed before going to Proposition 20 in 1972? What were some of the roadblocks?

01-00:33:39

Sieroty:

Well, the roadblocks were in the state senate. We got it through the assembly three times, and we knew that if we couldn't get it through the state senate, we had to do something else. So we were preparing for an initiative before we had the hearing in the state senate. Then, when we had the hearing in the state senate in the third year, one democratic member of the senate was not there. The committee was originally five people; there were only four people there: two Republicans, two Democrats. The Democrats voted for it, the Republicans did not vote for it, and so the bill failed. When that occurred, we decided we had to go to the initiative.

We put in a stronger bill than we had at the time of the senate hearing, because we had to take out certain things. But when we went to the initiative,

we tried to make it as strong a bill as we could. Then John Dunlap and I went around during the election that it occurred, and we went up and down the California coast and lobbied the voters for the initiative—"Proposition 20" it was in those days. And it passed.

01-00:35:15

Holmes: I wanted to talk a little bit about that—

01-00:35:17

Sieroty: By about 55 percent, by the way. Yeah.

01-00:35:19

Holmes: I wanted to talk a little bit about the initiative. So you are saying the genesis of the idea was probably after the first two bills didn't pass that you and John Dunlap were starting to strategize a bit about a third option. That's how the proposition came about?

01-00:35:42

Sieroty: Well, I don't know that that's exactly right. We began to think a little bit bigger. When Ellen Harris mentioned this to me about doing the entire coast, then we started thinking, well, that's what we ought to do. So we turned our attention to trying to develop a proposal that would protect the coastal area to the public all up and down the coast.

01-00:36:14

Holmes: But in regards to Proposition 20, putting that together, did that differ much from the bills that you and John Dunlap had developed?

01-00:36:24

Sieroty: No, it was the same. It was the same bill.

01-00:36:26

Holmes: It was the same bill?

01-00:36:26

Sieroty: Yeah.

01-00:36:28

Holmes: We'll talk about Peter Douglas later here in our conversation in a little bit more detail, but I wanted to ask you what was his role in this? He worked in your office—is that correct?

01-00:36:44

Sieroty: Peter Douglas was a very close friend of mine. He was introduced to me as a UCLA law school graduate by Rowan [K.] Klein, who was on my staff at that time, who was also at UCLA law school. I can remember that he said, "Well, I would like you to meet Peter Douglas." We had lunch together in Los Angeles. I liked him, and I suggested he join our staff in Sacramento. He agreed to do that.

He came up, and I gave him the work on the Coastal Commission to help us with. He wanted to know where he ought to be living, and I suggested that he take a look in Marin County, because we had a ranch in Marin, and I loved western Marin. I said, "Well, that's only one place you ought to look. You ought to look at other things." As soon as he saw that, he jumped and bought a house in Marin. We were always very close friends, well, during all the time that he was alive, when he came to work with us.

So he took on the responsibility of working on the Coastal Commission drafts, and when we actually passed Proposition 20, we had a committee of the state assembly which was devoted to the Coastal Commission activities, and he became the director of that committee.

01-00:39:02

Holmes:

Did he help put together the legislation, and write the legislation?

01-00:39:06

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

01-00:39:09

Holmes:

I know he went to law school. I've always wanted to ask if his background in law helped him with not just the work he did on the Coastal Commission, but even in this earlier period.

01-00:39:24

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah. I'm sure it did.

01-00:39:26

Holmes:

Yeah. Can we talk a little bit about the campaign itself? You were mentioning that you were going around the state with John Dunlap.

01-00:39:35

Sieroty:

Yeah. We went up and down the coast, and tried to get as much press as we could to let people know that there was an initiative on the ballot, and how important it was, and this and that, you know?

01-00:39:49

Holmes:

Did you join Senator Jim [James R.] Mills's bike rides?

01-00:39:53

Sieroty:

Well, Jim Mills had his own thing, but he helped us. Yes, he did.

01-00:39:58

Holmes:

Yeah. In my research, I even noticed that there is a lot of talk of Jim Mills and the bike ride from San Francisco down here to LA.

01-00:40:09

Sieroty:

Yeah.

01-00:40:10

Holmes:

And then in the North Coast, which is a completely different environment politically and economically, that they were feeling left out. So he even took the bike ride back up to the North Coast, from what I understand.

01-00:40:31

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah? Well, I didn't know that.

01-00:40:32

Holmes:

Yeah. How about Peter Douglas's role? I have only heard some of the stories of what Peter was doing during the campaign, but was he also actively trying to drum up support and work with other organizations?

01-00:40:47

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Peter and I were very close friends in all this period of time. He threw himself into the campaign as well, sure.

01-00:41:00

Holmes:

There were others, as well, organizations, such as Janet Addams.

01-00:41:05

Sieroty:

Yeah. Janet Adams, I wish I could find her. I tried to find her recently and I couldn't. But Janet Addams took on the responsibility of the campaign, and she did a terrific job.

01-00:41:20

Holmes:

The Coastal Alliance? Is that correct? Was that the name of the group?

01-00:41:24

Sieroty:

It may have been. I don't remember now.

01-00:41:28

Holmes:

Isn't she based out of Sonoma County?

01-00:41:35

Sieroty:

I don't think so. I don't know where she was based. Someone told me she was in the Caribbean, and I don't know.

01-00:41:45

Holmes:

But during the campaign, was she coordinating this throughout the state?

01-00:41:51

Sieroty:

Yeah.

01-00:41:53

Holmes:

That's a hefty job.

01-00:41:54

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah. It was a big job, and I think everybody was a volunteer. I don't think anybody got paid anything. But we had a lot of people working at that time. There were a lot of attorneys involved with us in trying to work out the legislation. Yes, there were a lot of good people involved in it.

01-00:42:20

Holmes:

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Gary Patton out of Santa Cruz, who was running for the Board of Supervisors in Santa Cruz at this very time. He was saying that during the Prop 20 campaign, it really was almost a quintessential sixties environment. I mean, it was multi-generations; you had had surfers out there with older housewives petitioning for people to support the proposition. Do you have any recollections of or thoughts on just that kind of overwhelming and diverse support?

01-00:43:02

Sieroty:

Yeah. There was a lot of diverse support. The surfers, of course, are very important people in this effort, and there were so many people who loved the coast and were trying to protect it. This was an opportunity for them to get involved in something. It was a good campaign.

01-00:43:27

Holmes:

You grew up here in Los Angeles. Your political career is largely based out of here. One of the most interesting aspects, if you look at the map of coastal counties of where Prop 20 passed and where it didn't, is that it didn't do very well in the North Coast. The North Coast is kind of a really different environment. But when we look at Orange County, it passed and Orange County is supposed to be that cauldron of California conservatism—this is Reagan country. What were your thoughts on that? That Prop 20 seemed to go across party lines among the voters as well?

01-00:44:15

Sieroty:

Well, it did. But let me mention something to you, because, yeah, I grew up here in Los Angeles, but my grandparents had a house in Hermosa Beach. When I was a kid, we used to go there, and I can remember the ocean being so important. I would go to bed at nighttime and the ocean would be making noise, the surf coming in. And watching the sun go down over the ocean, I mean, this was an important part of my childhood. Maybe other people also had some experiences like this. The coast was a very important part of living in California. So it just became a part of my life.

01-00:45:25

Holmes:

Yeah. Again, that kind of perspective, when we look at a place like Orange County, why Prop 20 passed—

01-00:45:34

Sieroty:

I have no idea why the people of Orange County supported it.

01-00:45:36

Holmes:

But it could be a very similar attachment—

01-00:45:41

Sieroty:

Yeah, these people had some love of the ocean the same way, you know?

01-00:45:43

Holmes:

When we think of opposition to Prop 20, as well as opposition to the earlier bills, the stumbling block within the senate, and mostly senate Republicans—

01-00:46:02

Sieroty:

Opposition came from the industries, and from cities, because we were taking away control from the cities. So many of the cities organized opposition to what we were doing. But mostly, you had all the industrial lobbyists and their money involved in this kind of campaign against it. But on the other hand, I kind of just looked at it the other day: I forget now who it was, but we had a cartoonist—one of the great cartoonists of that time did a t-shirt, and it said something like, “I can’t find the coast anymore,” because there was so much building along the coast that you couldn’t find it anymore. I don’t remember exactly what it was. But people were realizing that the coast had to be saved, and that’s what we were trying to do.

The organization of the Coastal Commission, maybe we will get to this later, but when you mentioned something about Northern California, we put San Francisco in the division that we had for the groups. We had San Mateo County, San Francisco, and Marin. In order to save Marin at that time, we wanted to have the strong San Francisco people there, in terms of that group of people and that commission. So we thought about all these different feelings of people along the coast, and tried to work that through.

01-00:48:13

Holmes:

No, I definitely want to get to the organization, because it’s a very important part. And it’s something as a historian, I could only study the regions that were formed, right? But to get your back story on why those regions were put together the way they were, it would be interesting.

But before we get there, I did want to touch on the opposition. If you go into the state archives, you could find the documents of those who gave money against—the opposition of Prop 20. It’s almost like the *Who’s Who of California Business*. From your oil companies to construction, to banks, even, such as Bank of America and Wells Fargo. Some have pointed out that these are the same funders and business supporters of Ronald Reagan, and the Reagan administration. Did you see any active opposition of the Reagan administration against the proposition?

01-00:49:17

Sieroty:

No. But I always thought that he would veto the bill if it ever got to his desk. So when we lost in the state senate, I thought, well, maybe this is not so bad after all, because if we passed it and it got to his desk, he probably would have vetoed it. And then we have got to start all over again the next year, and where would we go? I don’t know.

01-00:49:54

Holmes:

That's interesting. By putting it out to a vote of the people, I believe the Coastal Commission is the first state agency ever formed by the actual vote of the people, not by the legislature.

01-00:50:05

Sieroty:

That may have been. I am very critical of the initiative process, because I think today a lot of bills go through the initiative process, and the people never know what it is, and they vote for it because it has some slogan or something. I differentiate our efforts because we went three times through the legislature. When you go through the assembly committees and the senate committees, they tend to require you to think again about a lot of provisions in the bill that maybe you hadn't thought about that well, so you would change it. You improve it as a result of those hearings. So I thought, well, gee, we went through it three times, and by this time, the people know about the legislation, and so forth. So I thought, well, we are okay going to the initiative.

01-00:51:09

Holmes:

Do you have any recollections of election night when it actually passed? Were you surprised?

01-00:51:17

Sieroty:

I don't remember. I don't remember.

01-00:51:21

Holmes:

It's funny. Some others who were active in the campaign, I always ask the same question, of, "Hey, were you surprised that it passed, considering the opposition?" A lot of people say, "No, I wasn't surprised." Like there was a feeling that this was right, at least, among a large swath of Californians; that something had to be done, and so even all that money against the campaign couldn't really stop it. But you also had volunteers who—the stories of changing the billboards and all of that. Do you recall any of that?

01-00:52:02

Sieroty:

Changing the billboards, I don't remember that, no.

01-00:52:04

Holmes:

It used to be "No on Prop 20," and so they went to all the billboards and they painted over the "no" and wrote "yes."

01-00:52:11

Sieroty:

I don't remember that, no.

01-00:52:15

Holmes:

Well, it did pass. You were touching on the organization of the early commission, which I believe had six regions that had commissions themselves, and then a state commission. Can you talk a little bit about that, what you were thinking when putting it together?

01-00:52:35

Sieroty:

Well, that was our idea, to have small commissions. They weren't so small because there was 1,000 miles of coastal area, so trying to divide it up, it was—you know, no one had done this before. How did we come to that number? I don't remember now exactly, but we wanted to try to have strong commissions, and so that was the reason why I mentioned to you about San Francisco. We knew that there was a strong environmental movement in San Francisco, so that could go over into Marin and San Mateo. So we put those together. The North Coast was a small population but a large area, so there was not too much you could do about that. Because I thought about this, and I have thought about this ever since: that the North Coast is such a beautiful area, and if we had only tried to protect that, that would have been enough for a bill. And I think we are protecting it. Los Angeles is a difficult area of the coastal area, because so many people use the beaches, and there is no parking. That'll change. Over a period of time, we will get more access to the coast as we can get into these developments. It's a difficult area, but we are trying to protect the beaches for the public.

We had really two functions. One was to protect the beaches for the public. The second area was to have better development along the coastal areas. Those were the two major points that we were trying to accomplish.

01-00:54:57

Holmes:

So Mel [Melvin B.] Lane and Joe [Joseph E.] Bodovitz were tapped, respectively, as the chair and executive director of the first Coastal Commission. They were at BCDC in the same positions before. Did you have any interaction with Mel Lane and Joe Bodovitz and the function of that?

01-00:55:20

Sieroty:

Yes, I did, although I want to stress the difference. Joe Bodovitz had had experience as the executive officer of that commission, and that was very important to us to have that experience. Joe is a marvelous guy. I didn't know Mel Lane too well, but he was a Republican, and he came on, and he led the commission in a beautiful way. He was a very good chairperson. So it was bi-party. It had Democrats, Republicans involved in the commission, and I think that gave it a lot of strength. We had to come up with a plan.

We had three years to develop the plan, and then we had to go back to the legislature, and that was a very difficult time. Peter Douglas was involved with it all the time out of our office. During those three years, I didn't do very much in the Coastal Commission stuff. I figured they have a staff now; they are going to take care of it. So I left it up to Peter to let me know when things were good or bad, or there was something that he wanted to tell me about.

01-00:57:13

Holmes:

As you mentioned, Ellen Harris was the vice chair. What can you say about her role and influence on the commission?

01-00:57:22

Sieroty:

Well, I mentioned to you that she was the original person, the person who gave me the idea for developing a commission for the entire coast. This was such a mind-boggling idea, for me. Maybe other people had thought about it, but I hadn't. So I am indebted to her for that inspiration.

01-00:57:50

Holmes:

From most accounts, she held her own on that commission, especially as the lone woman, if I am correct.

01-00:57:59

Sieroty:

She may have been.

01-00:58:01

Holmes:

Joe Bodovitz—I believe it was Joe—was recalling a story of they had a break during one commission meeting, and the men were all chatting, and then they went into the men's room. Ellen got so fed up with that kind of stuff that she felt like, well, you are leaving me out of the discussions. So one day, she burst right into that men's room as well, and said, "Well, I'll stand here and continue in the conversation." She made her presence known.

01-00:58:31

Sieroty:

Yeah. Yeah. She was a strong woman.

01-00:58:36

Holmes:

Now, she was only there for the first, I believe, four years. Is that correct?

01-00:58:41

Sieroty:

I think so.

01-00:58:43

Holmes:

And then some say that she became—I don't think critical of the commission, but critical of some of its decisions later on. Do you recall any of that?

01-00:58:55

Sieroty:

No, I don't remember those.

01-00:58:56

Holmes:

I think the one issue for her was the San Onofre power plant [San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station] down there in San Diego. That was something that, of course, was voted down. According to one of the documents Peter Douglas left, it was voted down initially by the commission, and then Peter Douglas said, "Well, I had to rally the troops, actually, in a hotel room to say we should rethink this." What's hard with the commission is trying to balance not wanting a new plant on the coast with the fact that such a plant would be more efficient than probably the three older plants that we already have. So that was always an interesting story. Do you remember any of the debates on that?

01-00:59:51

Sieroty:

No, I don't. Now, of course, they have closed that, and they are going to get rid of that. I was always opposed to atomic energy because I was worried about the waste. What would we do with the waste? No one had ever come up with any answer on that, and they still haven't after all these years. We don't know what to do with the waste.

01-01:00:25

Holmes:

And not just the waste, but there is also the water discharge backed into the ocean, which is at a different temperature.

01-01:00:32

Sieroty:

Well, that's true, too.

01-01:00:34

Holmes:

Somebody told me the story that later on when San Onofre—and this is when Peter Douglas was executive director—came up for a renewal with their permit, Peter instituted what became the standard that the companies had to pay. That the companies had to acknowledge some of the discharge and damage that you could be doing to the ocean, and so they had to set up a fund to help pay for restoration and other environmental studies all on their own. This became the standard, which is not just used in California, but other places as well. It's just an example of the foresight I think Peter Douglas brought to that commission.

01-01:01:29

Sieroty:

Yeah.

01-01:01:30

Holmes:

You were mentioning Peter Douglas, he still worked in your office at this time [until 1976], but was handling the Coastal Commission almost like a liaison between the legislature and this. Do you remember any of his activities on that, or was it just he went full steam ahead while you were handling other legislative business?

01-01:01:55

Sieroty:

I don't remember anything. It's partly my memory is not so good anymore, but also, I was involved with other legislation all of this time.

01-01:02:10

Holmes:

Do you remember some of the early cases that the commission had to address? Thinking here, of course, Sea Ranch, but also the Irvine Ranch and Avco development [Laguna Niguel Planned Community], which were somewhat here in your backyard.

01-01:02:26

Sieroty:

I don't remember what the issues were.

01-01:02:29

Holmes:

But they were long, drawn-out fights, I know. Avco, I believe, was already in development when the commission passed, so it was a vested rights argument. But Mel Lane and the rest of the commission, and Ellen Harris, put a stop to their development, which for some, and particularly the Irvine company, really altered the way developers would have to deal with the Coastal Commission. It gave the commission teeth, I guess. But you don't remember any of that?

01-01:03:04

Sieroty:

I don't remember that, no.

01-01:03:05

Holmes:

Okay. So you were saying that they were developing a plan, and that came up with the Coastal Act of 1976. That was the resulting legislation after the plan, and it had to get passed by the legislature. Was Peter Douglas the main writer on this bill? Did this bill in 1976 differ much from what was already in place?

01-01:03:34

Sieroty:

No, it didn't differ too much, and Peter was involved in that, yes.

01-01:03:43

Holmes:

Could you tell me a little bit about the passage of this? I know there was some haggling. There are some stories of Peter being his strategic self: of laying out the bill, yet covering the walls with maps of the coast. From what I understand, when legislators would come in to look at the bill, he'd put maps of the coast on the walls, and they were more concerned about where that boundary of the coastal zone went through their section than what was actually in the bill.

01-01:04:22

Sieroty:

Well, I can remember that towards the end of that process, Charlie [Charles Hugh] Warren, who was my seatmate in the assembly, took over the leadership of the Coastal Commission Act. Tony Beilenson was the original author, I think, because they wanted to start in the state senate, and move it towards the assembly. But I think partly, they didn't want me to be the author of it, because I was not an effective legislator in terms of getting a bill through. Other people were able to do a better job than I. I admit that. I had difficulty with controversial issues, and that was going to be a very controversial issue.

So Tony was a very close friend of mine, and I had no objection to him taking it over. He started on the bill, and then he lost; I think they had the first vote, and it didn't work out, so I don't know exactly what happened. So someone else took it over. Towards the end, we were working on the exact location, and I can remember Charlie Warren and I, in some places, we upped the coastal area to certain things because we wanted to get certain things in there. In other areas, we made it very narrow. So these things are arbitrary. There is

no way you can take a look at the California coast and—it's not all the same. We had to use our best judgment.

01-01:06:23

Holmes:

In getting it passed, at least in the literature that's been written since, it's been said that it was a hard road to get enough votes, and Jerry Brown is often credited with, I guess at the eleventh hour, getting those votes. What are your thoughts or recollections on getting that bill passed?

01-01:06:49

Sieroty:

I don't really remember very much. I don't remember Jerry Brown's efforts. He may have done that; I don't remember exactly.

01-01:07:06

Holmes:

My question on that front was always: Was it really political maneuvering, or was it having nearly four years of a commission that proved itself, too, which I think was very important.

01-01:07:19

Sieroty:

Well, there were a lot of people opposed to it at the same time. And then still, the industries were opposed to it, and a lot of legislators were opposed to it as well. So it wasn't easy.

01-01:07:33

Holmes:

Now, the following year—so in 1977—you moved to the state senate. Is that correct?

01-01:07:44

Sieroty:

I think so. Yeah.

01-01:07:46

Holmes:

What was the reason for your move?

01-01:07:51

Sieroty:

The seat opened up, yeah. Tony went on to the [United States] Congress, and so I ran for his seat.

01-01:07:59

Holmes:

And Peter, at that time, once the bill passed, the Coastal Act, was there any discussion of him following you, going with you to the senate, or that he wanted to stay and actually help run this new agency?

01-01:08:16

Sieroty:

Well, he was working with the Coastal Commission, so he became the director, eventually, of the Coastal Commission.

01-01:08:27

Holmes:

So he decided by 1977 that he would—

01-01:08:31

Sieroty:

I don't remember exactly what the year was when he left the assembly and went on to work directly with the commission.

01-01:08:40

Holmes:

The Coastal Act went through a revision, I believe, in 1981, and it was called the Mello Act. 1981 seemed to be this timeframe when they were taking out the affordable housing provision within the Coastal Act. Also, there had to be a legislated solution for the Sea Ranch. Do you remember any of these debates or discussions?

01-01:09:22

Sieroty:

I don't remember those, no.

01-01:09:28

Holmes:

Well, maybe we could talk about the Brown administration, and Jerry Brown and the Coastal Commission, to get your thoughts on that. How would you define his relationship with the Coastal Commission? As we were talking before we went on camera, so today, Jerry Brown is a champion of the environment, a very outspoken proponent for addressing climate change. Did you see this same kind of environmental focus in his first term as governor?

01-01:10:07

Sieroty:

You know, it's hard for me to remember a lot of this stuff. I can just tell you I feel like I have known Jerry Brown probably longer than anybody else, because before he became governor—when Pat Brown was the governor—I was on Pat Brown's staff as the deputy director of the Chile-California Program. Jerry Brown wanted to go down to Chile, so I helped arrange for his trip down to Chile. So I feel like I have known him forever.

01-01:11:02

Holmes:

Yeah, because that was probably before he ever ran for office.

01-01:11:05

Sieroty:

Oh, yeah. That was before, yeah. Recently, there was an issue involving several Coastal Commission members wherein Jerry Brown wouldn't speak about what direction he had given them, and apparently, they voted against the purists. I consider myself [laughs] one of the purists. So he has quite an influence, I think, because he had several appointees, and although we tried to—and that's another thing we did. We split the appointments differently than most commissions.

01-01:11:58

Holmes:

Discuss that a little bit.

01-01:12:00

Sieroty:

Well, we wanted the legislature to have more of a say than the governor, just because in the past, the governors have been difficult to deal with, and we wanted to have more of a people-oriented commission. So we split it up. I think we had four assembly votes, four senate votes, and four governor votes.

That was another thing we did: we had twelve rather than—most of these commissions have thirteen or an odd number, so it makes it easier to pass—but we didn't want to do that. So these are just kind of the things we tried to hold back a lot of power, so that it became difficult to move things against the commission.

But I think Jerry overall has been supportive of the Coastal Commission. There were issues that he was not happy with; I know that. But I think overall, he has been okay.

01-01:13:26

Holmes:

When they talk about some issues that Jerry Brown wasn't always happy with in dealing with the Coastal Commission, Malibu usually comes into the conversation. His girlfriend at the time, Linda [Maria] Ronstadt, who lived in Malibu, was battling with the commission. Then there was also the Malibu fire that ripped through there I believe in the 1970s. Some would say that the fear there among Malibu residents was that the commission was going to use the rebuilding and permit process to require coastal access, which Malibu has traditionally fought. Do you have any recollection of that?

01-01:14:17

Sieroty:

I don't remember the fire. I don't remember that. But you are right. Let's say even liberal Democrats who had very large investments in the Malibu area didn't like the Coastal Act because it allowed the public to get into the front of their homes. So they tried to do everything they could to discourage that, which I thought was not very democratic, in a way. That coast and the ocean belongs to all the people, and we wanted to protect that.

01-01:14:59

Holmes:

It's interesting when we look at that. Looking at Michael [L.] Fischer's tenure as executive director after Joe Bodovitz left, that was one of the things that you began to see with Sea Ranch and some of the other developments: the political support within the legislature for the Coastal Commission began to wane. He even pointed out, it began to even wane among Democrats, because they realized that the Coastal Commission was affecting their properties or their vacation houses, but also especially those of their donors. So the Coastal Commission began to rattle both sides, I guess, of the political aisle. Did you notice that kind of declining political support of the commission once it actually began to do its job?

01-01:15:52

Sieroty:

No. No, I did not. I knew there were instances of that, but—

Let me tell you one story that I just think—in terms of my feelings about it all. When I left the legislature, I joined my father's company—this company here [Sieroty Company]—in the real estate business. We made a deal with a broker, and he wanted to acknowledge that, and so he invited me to come to a dinner at a newly-built resort on the Orange County coast. I went there, and

we had a marvelous dinner, and dancing afterwards and all; it was just a lovely time. I went to bed, and when I woke up in the morning, I looked out the window, and there was a beach, and there were hundreds of people—maybe not hundreds, but a large number of people who were walking down towards the ocean. I thought, gee, this never would have happened without the Coastal Commission. Because in order to build that hotel, the hotel owners had to provide access to the public to use the beach. In Orange County, that would never have happened without the Coastal Commission. This was one of the top hotels. The richest people over here, and some of the poorest people over here, right, using the same coast. What could make you feel better than that?

01-01:18:04
Holmes:

Indeed. Some critics of the commission have always—and particularly even politicians, such as Ronald Reagan—during that time, when fighting the commission, would say, “Oh, well, they are trying to stop all development.” Yet if you actually look at the record, they didn’t stop development.

01-01:18:27
Sieroty:

No.

01-01:18:27
Holmes:

The commission tried to shape development along the coast.

01-01:18:31
Sieroty:

That’s exactly right.

01-01:18:34
Holmes:

In 1976, when they were trying to pass that Coastal Act, I even came across that Pat Brown himself was part of an organization that was trying to, I guess, oppose the 1976 bill. Did you ever—

01-01:18:51
Sieroty:

No, I never heard of Pat Brown being against it. No.

01-01:18:54
Holmes:

Yeah. I was very shocked about that as well. Again, I have to do more research on my part to kind of dig into that, because it may not always be what it seems.

01-01:19:02
Sieroty:

That’s right.

01-01:19:05
Holmes:

But as you were saying, you decided to leave politics in 1982 and not run for reelection to the senate. What was your reasoning for leaving?

01-01:19:16
Sieroty:

Well, I was getting married. My dad was ill, and I felt some responsibility to the business. I had been in office for sixteen years, and after a while, it

becomes somewhat repetitious. You put the same bills in every year, you get a few passed and then you lose a few. But I just felt I had done what I could do, and it was time to try to do something else.

01-01:19:45

Holmes:

Well, and again, as you were just describing, the Coastal Commission, what a great legacy that you helped—

01-01:19:52

Sieroty:

Well, it really is. I feel very good about that. And I think of Ellen Harris quite a bit, because she was the one who put it in my head. That's why I wanted to tell you that, because I know you were somewhat thinking about the San Francisco Bay Conservation Development Commission as being the idea. Well, it may have been the idea for other people, but it wasn't the idea for John Dunlap and me. We didn't see the correlation; we didn't see the connection to the—I mean, it's a wonderful thing and it brought all these people together and so forth, but it didn't seem to have a relationship to what we were trying to do.

01-01:20:44

Holmes:

Well, this is the important of oral history, then, center—

01-01:20:57

Sieroty:

Yeah. I mean, I want you to talk to John Dunlap as well and get his ideas about this, because he was heavily involved. And also, you can't talk with Ed Z'berg because he has died, but Ed Z'berg was an important leader for us.

01-01:21:05

Holmes:

How so? Because you were saying he headed the—what was it? The Natural Resources Committee?

01-01:21:10

Sieroty:

Yes, it was the Natural Resources Committee. He had been elected, I think, two years before we were elected, and he was the chairperson of that committee. He encouraged us to try to do things.

01-01:21:25

Holmes:

Yes, that's important. I wanted to get your outside—after you left politics—a bit of your outside and inside perspective on some of the political happenings with the commission; I also want to talk about Peter Douglas. But in thinking of Jerry Brown's first two terms, and then, of course, we have the hindsight of looking at him today—what are some of your thoughts of how much he's changed?

01-01:21:58

Sieroty:

Well, let me just tell you about one situation. When Jerry Brown was elected, the Democrats in the state assembly were having lunch with him as our really first meeting with him, and all of us were very pleased that he had been elected, and we saw the opportunities to do things that we couldn't get through in the Reagan years. So we had lunch with him, and we started talking

about some of the bills that we had wanted to get through, and he was not receptive. He had an entirely different viewpoint. I won't say "entirely different," but he had his own ideas, his own philosophy. He wasn't Pat Brown. He didn't follow Pat Brown. In a way, he was against the things that his father had done. There was a certain clash between his father and Jerry Brown, and Jerry had his own ideas of doing things.

So we became somewhat frustrated by that. His first term was not all gravy for us. In fact, I can remember being on the phone with him at midnight, the last time he could talk to anybody before he had to veto some bills. He had one of my bills there, and we talked about it, and I could not respond to the kind of questions he would ask me, because it wasn't my thinking in terms of the bills that I had passed. And so he vetoed the particular bill I am talking about. I happened to be in Hawaii at the time, and he was in Sacramento. We weren't on the same wavelength.

Now, I applaud what he is doing at the moment, because he is taking over the role of the presidency, showing real leadership for California and for the nation. And I think that's great. He is a long way away from where he was, how many years ago—

01-01:24:33

Holmes:

Yeah, what would that be? Forty? Over forty years?

01-01:24:36

Sieroty:

Yeah. So I have known Jerry Brown about as long as anybody has, and I like him, and I think he is a good guy. But we haven't always agreed on everything.

01-01:24:51

Holmes:

You are saying he was different on some fronts than, say, his father. Do you think he was a little more to the left? A little more progressive than his father? Or was it just his ideas were just different on how he saw things?

01-01:25:10

Sieroty:

I wouldn't say he's more to the left, although he had an advisor at that time—I forget his name; you probably remember his name—but who was a very strong influence on him. Do you remember that he drove a Plymouth?

01-01:25:36

Holmes:

A blue Plymouth, yeah.

01-01:25:38

Sieroty:

And he had an apartment which I don't know if he even had a bed in there. He was sleeping on the floor or something. I mean, he really was kind of an austere guy. He had his own way of looking at things.

01-01:25:54

Holmes:

Some joke that he is still very austere; that you are going to go have lunch with the governor, and you think that oh, real sit-down and dining, and he is like, “No, we are having hot dogs” still to this day.

But I know when thinking of some of the things that he was doing—and not just with the Coastal Commission, but also was very supportive of Cesar Chavez and the UFW [United Farm Workers], with the farm workers—it was certainly a night and day kind of experience versus Ronald Reagan. So I guess in some ways, in his first term, he was trying to make his own path.

01-01:26:39

Sieroty:

Yeah.

01-01:26:39

Holmes:

But as you were saying, he was also a little different than what the assembly Democrats had legislatively.

01-01:26:46

Sieroty:

Right.

01-01:26:49

Holmes:

I wanted to also get your thoughts on the [George] Deukmejian administration. Now, I am sure you came across George Deukmejian in the senate, or at least, when he was a senator, when you were in the assembly as well. Well, I think he was still in the senate by the time you moved to the senate. Is that correct?

01-01:27:12

Sieroty:

When I got to the senate?

01-01:27:13

Holmes:

Yes.

01-01:27:14

Sieroty:

I don't remember when he was governor and when he was a senator. I don't remember now.

01-01:27:20

Holmes:

Well, I think he was elected governor right after Jerry Brown, so I think he came into office in 1983. But I think he was attorney general before that as well.

01-01:27:34

Sieroty:

It could be.

01-01:27:36

Holmes:

But Deukmejian, was he one of those in the senate who was opposed to the Coastal Commission?

01-01:27:42

Sieroty: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

01-01:27:45

Holmes: Because I know when you look at his campaign for governor, he made completely abolishing the Coastal Commission part of his platform.

01-01:27:55

Sieroty: Well, he did reduce the size of the staff of the commission, and the money that was available to the commission. He reduced that. But he didn't eliminate it.

01-01:28:08

Holmes: Yeah, he reduced that. I think he cut the budget by nearly 50 percent, all told.

01-01:28:12

Sieroty: What percentage?

01-01:28:13

Holmes: 50 percent? He cut it nearly in half.

01-01:28:15

Sieroty: Fifty? I didn't realize it was that great.

01-01:28:17

Holmes: Yeah. Mike Fischer had to deal with Deukmejian for a little bit before he left. In his oral history, he was giving a lot of credit to Peter Douglas, who, as he says, took this flower of what he considered the Coastal Commission, this very delicate flower, and guided it through the dark days of Deukmejian.

01-01:28:42

Both: [laughter]

01-01:28:45

Sieroty: That's wonderful.

01-01:28:48

Holmes: So he did cut that. Did you have any thoughts on the kind of operation, or why Deukmejian opposed the commission so vehemently?

01-01:28:57

Sieroty: Well, I think it's his political thinking was against this kind of thing, and more towards the business side of things. So that was not unusual.

01-01:29:14

Holmes: I always thought it was interesting, though, when we look at that free market conservative type of explanation of why he wanted to oppose the commission, yet at the same time, during the 1980s, under President Reagan, California received about \$51 billion in federal funds, for defense contracts and other things. So I always thought it was a bit of a paradox when they claim "free market" on this end, but they are happy to have government involved on another end.

01-01:29:51

Sieroty:

Republicans support the business community.

01-01:30:04

Holmes:

On that thought, I wanted ask, because I have done a lot of work on this area. You have been in politics for a while. Did you ever notice that there was a difference between that relationship between moderate Republicans like Thomas [Henry] Kuchel and others, who had relationships with business, but they also had relationships with sponsoring social reform or civil rights legislation, and also dealt with labor unions, versus what you would later get under the Republican mold of, say, Ronald Reagan, who was very strictly business, as you were saying?

01-01:30:48

Sieroty:

Well, everyone is different. All of us have a certain amount of support for this, and a certain amount of support for that, so it's hard to put people in boxes. But the Republicans in California, they have changed. They have changed. When I started in the state legislature, I think they were very conservative. But I think today, they are trying to find a way to appeal to more people. So I think they are still conservative, but I think they are trying to find ways to be more relevant.

01-01:31:45

Holmes:

But for George Deukmejian, you would say that his politics were very closely aligned with the business community?

01-01:31:53

Sieroty:

Yes.

01-01:31:53

Holmes:

And especially as governor?

01-01:31:55

Sieroty:

Yes. But you see, once this bill had passed as an initiative, it grew, because the people had supported it. And so no governor, insofar as I know, or I can't even think of Republican politicians are advocating the removal of the Coastal Commission. I haven't heard anything like that.

01-01:32:25

Holmes:

The only time I have ever seen it was with George Deukmejian.

01-01:32:31

Sieroty:

Well, he cut the budget, and you said 50 percent. Well, even at that time, there was a kind of a recession, where he had to do something on the budget, so he went heavily on cutting the Coastal Commission.

01-01:32:47

Holmes:

Michael Fischer came in as executive director, again, after Joe Bodovitz. Did you have any interaction with Michael Fischer?

01-01:32:59

Sieroty:

Very little.

01-01:33:00

Holmes:

Okay. Well, I'd like to talk about Peter Douglas in a little more detail. I have had the pleasure of talking with Mel Nutter, who was also a friend of Peter. But most people say that you probably had the closest relationship with Peter than a lot of people that I would be able to talk to. How would you say that his experience working for you in the assembly helped prepare him for later on taking over the helm of the Coastal Commission?

01-01:34:02

Sieroty:

Well, that's hard to answer. I would like to think that we evolved together in terms of what the coast ought to be. We had democratic ideas that the coast belonged to all the people of California—in fact, all the people of the world, I guess. We wanted to see that maintained. There was an awful lot of development along the coast where people could not get in. There are utilities which have very large developments. There were so many places where the coast is cut off because—well, maybe sometimes it's necessary. But we know many times, it wasn't necessary. So we had this idea about the coast being important to the public, and we wanted to maintain that. We wanted to try to improve on that. We also wanted to improve on the developments along the coast.

So we saw eye to eye. I don't remember ever having a disagreement with him. When he became the director, he would come down to Los Angeles for meetings, and we would usually have dinner together. He would tell me what's going on. So I kept up on the Coastal Commission work while he was the director, and he was director for—what? Sixteen years? Something like that.

01-01:35:51

Holmes:

I'm trying to think. It's over twenty.

01-01:35:56

Sieroty:

Over twenty?

01-01:35:57

Holmes:

Yes, because he started in '85, and then didn't leave until 2012 or '11? Something like that. So yeah, he was there quite a while.

01-01:36:08

Sieroty:

I saw him just before he died. He was in the Palm Springs area, and his son was down there, and I was able to tell his son a story that I thought that Peter might have told him this, but Peter didn't. Peter and his wife [Rotraut Schmidt] didn't want to have children. They thought it was a bad thing to bring kids into a terrible world. He told me that he was going to have an operation so that they wouldn't have kids, and I said, "Wait a minute." I took him into my office and we talked about it, and I convinced him not to do that.

So he gave up on the idea. And he had never told his son that he, at one time, had thought about not having any kids. And he has two sons [Vanja Douglas and Sasha Douglas].

I don't know. It just was a very personal relationship that we had. I felt very close to him.

01-01:37:46

Holmes:

Some had said that his experience of working with you and having that experience of working within the legislature gave him a bit of a political acumen that other executive directors didn't have.

01-01:37:58

Sieroty:

Yeah, I think that's true.

01-01:38:00

Holmes:

That strategically, he knew how to maneuver.

01-01:38:05

Sieroty:

That's right.

01-01:38:07

Holmes:

Can you think of some examples of him doing that, or some of the issues that he had to confront?

01-01:38:12

Sieroty:

I know he came to the legislature quite often. I think he had a lot of friends in the legislature, and people respected him. I don't remember any particular ideas that he used, but he was able to work with the legislature.

01-01:38:36

Holmes:

Do you remember some of the big issues he faced, like developments that he fought and—?

01-01:38:43

Sieroty:

Well, one of them was in Orange County. There is an island—what is it called now? I can't remember now. Where he opposed development. I think that he eventually was successful, and—

01-01:39:08

Holmes:

Well, I know Mel Nutter was telling me about the—where was it? In Long Beach? Disney [The Walt Disney Company] wanted to do a big theme park out there that would have required filling in hundreds of acres of shoreline.

01-01:39:24

Sieroty:

Yeah?

01-01:39:24

Holmes:

And that Peter led the charge against that. One of the more interesting cases that I have come across—I wondered if you have any recollections of this—was dealing with Pebble Beach.

01-01:39:39

Sieroty:

Yeah. He worked with the developer of Pebble Beach, and they became good friends, and they respected each other. And they worked out a compromise.

01-01:39:55

Holmes:

You know, that's interesting, the word "compromise," because for me, that's something that really, it seems that in some circles, it goes overlooked in regard to what Peter Douglas was able to do.

01-01:40:05

Sieroty:

Yeah. You are right, because people think it's one way or another. Well, it doesn't have to be that way. There can be respect for each other's point of view and development rights, and so forth. He saw that.

01-01:40:23

Holmes:

Yeah. Even, I think, at his funeral, the head of Pebble Beach [Peter Ueberroth] came and spoke, which, if you just read the press clippings of "development versus the Coastal Commission," you wouldn't think that would happen. But I think it's a testament to Peter Douglas.

01-01:40:44

Sieroty:

That's a very good example. Yeah.

01-01:40:49

Holmes:

Do you remember anything about the Hearst Ranch? This was in the 1990s.

01-01:40:58

Sieroty:

There was a development that the Hearst Ranch wanted to do along the coast, and Peter objected to that. The Coastal Commission turned down that development. That's about all I can think about right now.

01-01:41:18

Holmes:

I know San Simeon Point was the focus of what they wanted to development, that little peninsula that comes off right there, into the coast. It's really interesting. It's a great counterfactual of what could have been without the Coastal Commission: the point now that just sits in its natural state would have been covered with hotels, a golf course, and maybe a casino. It's again a testament to the legacy that you helped build—looking at those images of what could have been if it wasn't for the commission. It's pretty powerful—

01-01:42:03

Sieroty:

Well, today, the Hearst Ranch, the Hearst Castle is a marvelous place for tourists to go to see what William Randolph Hearst and his architect developed there. It's a beautiful sight. And you are right, had that been developed as a commercial thing, it would diminish the impact of the house itself, the William Randolph Hearst development there.

01-01:42:50

Holmes:

Yes, and protecting that natural beauty of the coast itself. You were mentioning when we think of the coast how diverse that 1,100 miles is from

the North Coast to, say, Marin and San Francisco, to the Central Coast, like Big Sur. In each of these places, we are seeing coastlines that you just don't see anywhere else in the world.

01-01:43:16

Sieroty: No, no.

01-01:43:18

Holmes: Again, to think that we are still able to enjoy that because they are not filled with houses right next to each other right along the coast. I know Peter fought very hard to keep it that way, as did many people there at the commission. But he also faced threats of dismissal twice. In other interviews, he said that those were the only two that came up for a vote; that he probably faced down at least a dozen threats. Do you have any thoughts or recollections on him facing those kind of threats of dismissal, and then those two cases that came before the commission?

01-01:44:05

Sieroty: Well, in one case, John Dunlap and I came down and spoke before the commission, urging the commission not to discharge Peter, talking about how important Peter has been to the commission. I don't know if that made a difference with the people who voted on it; I don't know. But we felt very strongly about that, and we expressed ourselves.

01-01:44:29

Holmes: I don't believe it ever even came up for a vote in either case, but what do you think was the source of tension? As executive director, after a while, he became synonymous with the Coastal Commission. And this, you could imagine, probably ruffled some feathers of certain commissioners, who saw it as their job to represent the commission. Did you have any thoughts on that?

01-01:45:15

Sieroty: No. No, I don't. But you are right. I think he did represent the commission, and because he felt so strongly about it, and he worked at it, and this was his life. This was his life, and I feel like I kind of guided him into this. I don't feel bad about it; I feel it was a wonderful thing, because he came out of law school really not knowing what to do. I happened to have had a chance to talk with him, and I saw something in him which was important, and I encouraged him to go ahead and work in government. And I think he got a great deal out of it too, I think. His last years, he had bought a place way up in the northern part of California—I think it's Smith River or something like that—where he enjoyed going. This was quite different from where he had been before, in Marin, which was very active. But he wanted to be up there.

01-01:46:41

Holmes: Sarah Christie has told me about this place. Sarah Christie, the legislative director who was also good friends with Peter there at the commission. I think it's in the upper county of Del Norte [County] is where that place is at. With the redwoods and the streams and—It's very beautiful up there.

What were your thoughts on Peter Douglas's legacy?

01-01:47:13

Sieroty:

Well, his legacy is the Coastal Commission.

01-01:47:18

Holmes:

I think that's a pretty succinct answer.

01-01:47:19

Sieroty:

Over the years, he has been the one most actively involved with the Coastal Commission. I know that he thought about it, he worked at it. This was important to him. It wasn't just a job. It was his life.

01-01:47:48

Holmes:

Yeah, yeah. No, I think in some of his later interviews, he admitted to such: that it wasn't just a job for him.

01-01:47:56

Sieroty:

I think he gave it up because he was ill, with some reluctance, and a lot of feeling. A lot of feeling about it.

01-01:48:12

Holmes:

Thinking also of service in state government, one is hard sought to find somebody who has probably served California longer than Peter Douglas in that kind of capacity.

01-01:48:24

Sieroty:

Well, that's true. I hadn't thought about that. That's true.

01-01:48:31

Holmes:

What comes with that is expertise. What are your thoughts on the threat of that diminishing? That people don't put in that kind of service as much anymore?

01-01:48:46

Sieroty:

Well, there may be other people who have. There probably are. In the legislative counsel's office [Office of Legislative Counsel], I would guess there would be people who have given most of their life to California that way, and probably other agencies. State Lands Commission I think at that time had a guy who was there for many, many years. So there are probably other people as well, but Peter was one of the unusual guys. He wasn't afraid to step out. He wasn't afraid to be controversial.

01-01:49:33

Holmes:

No, there was certainly that kind of strength and independence in his character.

01-01:49:37

Sieroty:

Yeah, yeah.

01-01:49:43

Holmes:

As one of the authors of what became the Coastal Act and founders of the Coastal Commission, if we look at the commission now, last year Charles Lester became the first executive director to be dismissed. That was the handpicked successor by Peter Douglas himself; that he thought that Charles could do a good job in that. What were your thoughts of Charles' dismissal?

01-01:50:23

Sieroty:

Well, I thought it was unfortunate. I didn't know him personally, so what that means to me is that he didn't reach out sufficiently. He was kind of inbred somehow, and I think that's what the commissioners themselves felt, too: that he wasn't really reaching out to them sufficiently. I think that was really the reason why many voted against him. But I don't know enough about what the workings were.

However, the *Los Angeles Times* did a whole series of stories about the California coast and the Coastal Commission. It wasn't entirely accurate, because news stories really aren't since they don't have the time to research the whole thing. But it did develop a strong resurgence of interest in the California coast, which is very important. Like Peter said, the coast is not something that is saved. You have got to continue to save it. And so these stories were important to get people to rethink the importance of the California coast.

01-01:52:12

Holmes:

Well, and it's also one of those aspects where many in California just take it for granted. And don't know the history and the story of how hard many fought to have the coastline that we do today.

01-01:52:28

Sieroty:

That's right.

01-01:52:30

Holmes:

It's interesting you mentioned the *LA Times*. I know in both the threats against Peter for dismissal, he was talking to a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, Jeff [Jeffrey L.] Rabin, who—at least in 1996—worked with Mel Nutter to get more media exposure on Peter Douglas, on what was happening, that he may be fired. Jeff Rabin was telling me that in the 1980s and 1990s you could go to a Coastal Commission meeting and you would have at least three, four, five, six newspaper reporters there covering the Coastal Commission and coastal issues. He said comparing that to today, before the threat against Charles Lester, the media coverage was minimal at best. A lot of this has to do with, of course, newspapers' dwindling resources; they have to reassign things. But it is interesting that because of the controversy over Charles Lester's dismissal, that, as you were pointing out, there was a resurgence in coverage, especially by the *LA Times*. I think they put five reporters on this for the first time in decades of covering coastal issues. It does speak to that.

But I think it also goes back to looking at how much Peter was able to develop those relationships with reporters. He knew how to use the media for positive influence within the Coastal Commission. Would you agree with that?

01-01:54:17

Sieroty:

I think so.

01-01:54:22

Holmes:

Lastly, I wanted to talk a little bit about maybe your thoughts on the future of the commission. The development pressure, particularly with California's rising population, doesn't seem to be easing at all.

01-01:54:37

Sieroty:

Well, that's very important. I think the commission remains a very important part of the California government, and I think it has to remain as strong as possible, and it also has to be valued by the people. One of the things it has to continue to work on is providing access to the coast in Los Angeles and Orange County, where the pressures are so great. But this is very important, to allow people to use the beaches. I think the more people who can use the beaches, the stronger your public support for the commission will be. The people have to realize that this commission plays a very important role, not just in limiting development, but in providing access to the beaches. So that's the focus that it has to have.

01-01:55:48

Holmes:

Today, there is a lot of talk about issues that really weren't addressed back in 1972, when you were putting this together. This was largely climate change, sea level rise, which is going to change and alter a lot of the different kind of focus and dynamics of the commission. What are your thoughts on this?

01-01:56:17

Sieroty:

Well, I am not going to be around to see this happen. Oh, sure: over the next 100, 200, 300 years, there is going to be a change in the level of the water coming up the coast.

By the way, I don't think we've utilized the energy of the waves that come into the coast sufficiently. Everyone says, "Well, it's too expensive." Well, one of these days, it won't be that expensive compared to other energy sources. But you just see every few seconds, there is a wave coming in. That's a lot of energy that could be utilized to do a lot of things. So someday, they will find a way to make that economical, too. So the coast is here to stay.

01-01:57:26

Holmes:

It's really interesting, too, is thinking about these additional threats to the coast, when we are talking about sea level rise, that California spearheaded an agency—such as the Coastal Commission—to deal with those kind of things, right? That we already have a state agency at least in place that not only regulates and protects the coast, but could also pull together scientists and experts to help address those kind of issues.

01-01:58:02

Sieroty:

Well, let me mention one other thing. The oil industry wants to once again develop access to the coast in order to bring oil in from outside the California limit, the three-mile limit. They'll put their materials outside. But now, the State Lands Commission, which is strongly an environmental body today, and the Coastal Commission will oppose coming ashore. So we do have some protection there.

So I think the people are beginning to recognize that the value, even in economic terms, of the California coast is so much bigger than the oil industry; that recreation and all the things that people do along the coast are tremendously important. I think that will even be stronger in the years ahead.

01-01:59:40

Holmes:

It's funny. In the classroom, we show pictures of the California coast in 1910, 1920—of Huntington Beach, and the oil derricks that are right on the beach. And they can't believe it. They say, "Oh, that can't be Huntington Beach."

01-02:00:03

Sieroty:

Well, I'll tell you: when I first went into government work, when I worked for Glenn Anderson, one of the first things that I was involved with was there were oil wells I think off of Hermosa Beach or Redondo Beach, in that area. And the installations were underwater. They were out there, but they were underwater. I am trying to remember now what we did about it. We tried to protect the development of the oil wells, but we wanted to be sure that it didn't affect the coastal environment. Then we had the Long Beach development, where there were supposed to be a million barrels of oil. We are talking about in those days of \$3 a barrel; I can remember it was something like that, and there was thought to be about a million barrels of oil out on Long Beach, \$3. I just remember those figures that we were talking about.

So I was actually a part of the development. Standard Oil had a deal with the city of Long Beach. They were going to take over. They were going to be the ones who were going to develop that site. But the State Lands Commission, which, the lieutenant governor and the controller were two of the three members of the State Lands Commission, they had other ideas. I think it was because Ed [Edwin Wendell] Pauley [Sr.], who was a Democrat, and he was close to Glenn Anderson, wanted to get a part of that oil, too. So Glenn Anderson talked to me about it. I didn't realize that Pauley was involved in the thing, but he talked to me about it, and I thought, well, gee—we ought to break it up. Don't lease it to one company. Break it up into several categories, which we did. In some cases, we got, like, 99 percent of the value of the oil goes to the city and the state. We got a lot more money—and I guess we are still getting it—from that oil, which, of course, the value of the oil has gone up more than \$3 today.

I wasn't against the oil industry. I just wanted to make it a little more democratic.

01-02:03:48

Holmes:

Did the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill also help your cause for creating the Coastal Commission?

01-02:04:01

Sieroty:

I'm sure it did.

01-02:04:03

Holmes:

Was it any part of the discussion?

01-02:04:05

Sieroty:

Because Ed Z'berg, who was the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I think he made some statements about it. I think that was before—what year was it? What year are you talking about?

01-02:04:26

Holmes:

1969.

01-02:04:27

Sieroty:

Well, I was in the legislature in 1969. I guess we all realized that there was going to be some change. It's hard for me to focus in on it. I don't remember now—but I'm sure it led us to believe that the oil industry was not the right way to go.

01-02:05:02

Holmes:

I know the Coastal Commission, in the decades since, has played an important role in helping develop safe regulations for the oil industries in their offshore operations, and working with them on that, even training programs. But also curtailing the amount of oil derricks. I think as one person told me, "We created the Coastal Commission to make sure that the California coast didn't look like Newport on the East Coast, but it was also to make sure that other places on the California coast also didn't look like Santa Barbara," meaning with the oil derricks out there. Did you have any thoughts on the Coastal Commission and regulating oil development?

01-02:06:13

Sieroty:

Oh sure, that was part of it. Before the Coastal Commission, we also were involved in Sonoma. Sonoma County, offshore of Sonoma, there was a proposed atomic reactor to be going out in that part of the coast. The lieutenant governor opposed that, too, and we were able to stop that development. That was in the early 1960s.

01-02:07:12

Holmes:

In looking at the energy industry, particularly when we had oil shortages in the 1970s, the Coastal Commission had to deal a lot with new proposals for oil drilling off the California coast during the 1980s, under Reagan and Deukmejian. That was actually a pretty hefty fight that played out in the press between the Coastal Commission and the Regan administration, and James [Gaius] Watts, who was the secretary of the interior. Do you have any

recollections on those fights, between oil and Republicans on one hand and the Coastal Commission on the other during the 1980s?

01-02:07:59

Sieroty: No, I don't. I don't remember that.

01-02:08:04

Holmes: Well, thank you so much for your time, senator. This has been great. Are there any afterthoughts on the commission, or anything else you would like to say before we end for today?

01-02:08:25

Sieroty: No, I can't think of anything. As soon as you leave, I probably will think of something. Maybe I can give you a call if that occurs. But I feel so proud that I was involved in the development of the Coastal Act, and I think the organization has done a good job. It's had its restrictions, because a lot of the governors did not support it. But it's remained there, and I think Peter Douglas has to be given a lot of credit for holding the thing together even though there were a lot of changes made in the structure and so forth.

But I think if you talk to John Dunlap, that would be helpful to you, because he has some memories of this as well. John is going to be down there this coming weekend. I am having dinner with him on Saturday night, I think. I don't know where you are going to be, but you can—

01-02:09:41

Holmes: I am going to be back home on Saturday night, but you let John know that I am going to be in touch soon.

01-02:09:44

Sieroty: He is closer to you up there, then, so you can reach him. But he will have some thoughts about this. But I feel it may have been, for me, well, maybe my most important contribution as a legislator. And so I feel very good about it.

01-02:10:13

Holmes: Well, you should. You should. And on behalf of California, let me say thank you.

01-02:10:18

Sieroty: Thank you.

01-02:10:19

Holmes: All right. Thank you, Alan.

[End of Interview]