

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Announcer: Glen D. Johnson, Jr. was the 8th Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, which includes 25 universities and state colleges. Johnson assumed the position in January 2007 after having previously served as the president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University for ten years.

Glen was born in Oklahoma City and is the son of former U.S. Congressman Glen D. Johnson, Sr. He obtained his bachelor's degree and juris doctorate from the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

Johnson established his successful political career as a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1982 to 1996. He became the youngest Speaker of the House in 1990, at age 36.

Glen has been of service through many agencies, including two terms on the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Board of Directors. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2006.

In his oral history interview, Glen talks about a letter he received from former U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Carl Albert, his first campaign, and House Bill 1017 on the podcast and website VoicesOfOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 9:05

Letter from Carl Albert

John Erling (JE): Well, my name is John Erling. And today's date is March 11th, 2026. So Glen, would you state your full name, please?

Glen Johnson (GJ): Glen D. Johnson.

JE: And we are recording this in the facilities of the Oklahoma History Center. Voices of Oklahoma works in partnership with the Oklahoma History Society here in Oklahoma City. So, your birth date?

CJ: My birth date is April 20th, 1954.

JE: Your present age is?

CJ: 71.

JE: And where were you born?

CJ: I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

JE: Let's talk about your mother. Your mother's name?

CJ: My mother's name was Imogen Storms Johnson.

JE: And where was she born? Where did she grow up?

CJ: OK, she was born in Okema, Oklahoma, grew up in Okema. She was -- although my parents and I lived many places through the years -- she always was very proud to be a lifelong resident of Okema. When my parents retired, they moved back to Okema in 1972.

JE: What was -- describe her and her personality.

CJ: Well, she was, John. I think I can say this, one of the finest, probably the finest person I've ever known; very talented, very musically inclined -- played the piano by ear -- which much later in her life when I opted to get into elective office, it was always handy to not only have a mother who was politically savvy on the campaign trail, but one that could play the piano, which it seemed like that just for various events that worked well. Everybody seemed to enjoy it. She was in business through the years. She began working right after school with the undergo all the way back to the New Deal to the with the Agriculture Adjustment Administration at the courthouse in Okema. That's where she met my father, who was out of law school and had opened a law practice in Okema and was running for the legislature in 1940 before World War Two; and they met and married in 1942 after he had gone into the service. My mother worked for many years when we were in Oklahoma City for Oklahoma Natural Gas Company, continued to maintain a lot of friendships with that organization. But she, when we moved back to Okema, she was assistant city clerk and city treasurer in Okema during the 70s and then retired in 1977.

JE: What do you think you drew from her growing up?

CJ: Well, I like to think, John, that I drew a lot of who I am today from both of my parents. My parents were different personalities to some degree. My father was very aggressive and hard-charging and always had a plan and knew where he wanted to go. My mother was very measured, very kind, very intelligent. But I would say from her again, you look at my background both as an attorney, someone that was in the political arena, it's a contact sport. Sometimes it's both of those can be a little difficult and my mother was the one that always said, "Just remember, whatever you're doing today, whatever the engagement is today, you're going to be with that person again tomorrow and remember that we're all in this for the long version." She certainly taught me patience and the importance of character, integrity, to be kind. I'm just, she instilled in me so many, many, many values that hopefully stay with me today.

JE: Your father's name?

CJ: My father's name was Glen D. Johnson, Sr.

JE: And then he was born and where did he grow up?

CJ: He was born in Melbourne, Arkansas. Moved to Okfuskee County, the Paden area when he was about 4 years old, so essentially grew up just like my mother in Okfuskee County, although my grandfather was what you would call a school teacher in rural Oklahoma and was taught at a number of schools in and around rural Okfuskee County and later in Lincoln County.

So my father grew up obviously going wherever my grandfather was teaching school. He was the oldest of 5 children, graduated, he was valedictorian at Paden High School. Graduated during the Depression, I believe, graduated in 1930, spent a year or two working, worked in the oil fields, attained his or earned his undergraduate degree, and then his law degree at the University of Oklahoma in 1939, came back to practice law then in Okema in 1939, ran for the state legislature in 1940 and was elected.

Resigned early after Pearl Harbor to go into the army is a lot, although, as I understand it, they had a legislative exemption where they weren't, they didn't have to do that, but he did and served. He was an officer, was a major in the army, served in England and France, Belgium, Luxembourg. Most of his time was in France in Reims, France. In fact, he was in the same office area as General Eisenhower. It was called the Little Red Schoolhouse

in Reims, France.

And he mustered out of the army in 1946, came back and ran for Congress, was elected. And was in that freshman class with our very good friend, one of his very best friends, Speaker Carl Albert, along with Congressman John Kennedy from Massachusetts and Congressman Richard Nixon from California, all in that same freshman class in 1946.

JE: Right. And you showed me a picture of that freshman class where John Kennedy was 29 years old, and so you have next to the picture in the same frame, a letter from Speaker Carl Albert that was written to you describing the picture. And because this is such a historical document, I would like for you to read the letter, Glen.

CJ: All right, the letter is dated, John, July 20th, 1984, to the Honorable Glen D. Johnson. "This memorandum will recount some of my recollections about the picture which I presented to you at the appreciation dinner held in your honor last spring in Holdenville, Oklahoma.

As I recall, it was a meeting of the new members of the 80th Congress held in the chamber of the House of Representatives on January 1947. It was a briefing session put on by the older members. Congressman Francis E. Tad Walter from Pennsylvania led the discussion. It was he who had the floor in the well of the house when the picture was taken.

Congressman Glen Johnson, your father, Jack Kennedy, and myself walked over to the floor of the house from the old Cannon Office Building together. We were seated on the Democratic right side of the aisle in the 3rd row from the back. I was resting my chin on my right hand. Your father was sitting next to me on my right, and Jack Kennedy next to your father on his right. A further interest perhaps, seated in the back row on the Republican side with his chin resting in his left hand was freshman Congressman Richard Nixon of California.

This picture has always been a favorite of mine. Your father and I were very close during the only term which he spent in the House of Representatives. We were with one another daily. This picture also has some significance to me in that I served as majority leader of the House when Jack Kennedy was president of the United States and as Speaker of

the House when Richard Nixon was president. This was the only class in the history of Congress that had among its members two future presidents and a future Speaker of the House, Carl Albert."

JE: (Giggling) I just can't help but laugh. And the fact that I can't call him just Carl, Carl Albert, would take the time to preserve that moment in history. He knew how important that was and that he wanted you to have it.

GJ: He did, and he did take the time to do it and as he would do on any endeavor that he undertook, he meticulously laid it out where by the end of the letter you knew the entire context of the picture. Obviously it's my favorite picture and one of my great, great memories.

JE: Right. And it's under glass in your office.

GJ: That's right.

JE: Did you have brothers and sisters?

GJ: Only, I'm an only child, so with all the pluses and minuses that go with that.

Chapter 3 – 6:30

Education

John Erling (JE): Your education. Where did you begin your grade school?

Glen Johnson (GJ): Well, we moved a bit. I started -- my kindergarten actually was here in Oklahoma City at Sequoia schools. My father again, because of his acquaintance with then US Senator Kennedy, was involved in the 1960 campaign for president and ultimately we were in California for that effort in Southern California.

Upon President Kennedy's election, my father went immediately to DC. He was chairman of the Oil Import Appeals Board within the Department of Interior. It was a three-judge panel that basically dealt with oil import, any appeals from oil import decisions, which through the years that's been, even today as we're in our situation with Iran, it's always a focal point in the economy and certainly many other things.

My mother and I stayed in California and I finished the school year in Ventura, California. I attended the Academy of Saint Catharine's by the Sea and then moved to Washington. In Washington, I went to Saint Matthew's Calvert School through the 8th grade.

Maybe of some note: President Kennedy's funeral service, his funeral mass was held at Saint Matthew's Cathedral on Rhode Island and Connecticut Avenue in Washington, which was -- my grade school was three doors down from the cathedral and was the school that was adjacent to the cathedral. So, we -- the funeral mass was held essentially in our church, so close connection, was in Washington John in the 60s from everything from the "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial through Vietnam and all of the protests in Dupont Circle, was there for the assassination of both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

And so the 60s, early, mid, late 60s was a very vocal and turbulent time and was there from through 9th grade. I went to Saint John's College on Military Road in Washington for my ninth grade year, which was a day military school that was started in 1851. And so then at the end of my ninth grade year, we moved back to Oklahoma and my father worked at the solicitor's office within the Department of the Interior in Muskogee, they're in the federal courthouse in Muskogee.

JE: So you graduated from Muskogee High School in what year?

CJ: 1972.

JE: Did your father jump early on to the campaign of John Kennedy?

CJ: Well, I guess, let me get the sequence. He became involved in '60, so I think as I recall, Kennedy announced in Senator Kennedy announced like the first of the year, although he'd been obviously doing a lot of preliminary work, and at some point after that announcement in the spring, he was contacted and asked if he had interest in being involved, which he did. And so then California was where he went, and that we...

JE: Your father?

CJ: My father, yes. In fact, a little footnote: because of it being in Southern California in 1960, I was 6 years old, that most of the movie stars were for Kennedy, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, certainly. I mean -- some I remember:

Gene Barry, Milton Berle, and when they would have events in Santa Monica and LA I would sometimes go with my parents and all of these stars that I would see on TV as a six year old were there on the stage getting involved in the presidential race. So it was kind of interesting.

But that's the first night I was allowed to stay up all night. The election went on all night and it was not decided till about 8 the next morning that Kennedy actually very narrowly only won the race by 100,000 votes nationwide, which is a very slim margin. But my parents gave me permission to stay up at 10 o'clock when it's time to go to bed. I said, "As a 6 year old, I want to stay up and see this through," and I can remember my parents said, "Well, it's probably worth doing that," so I, that was my first all-nighter. Followed by many in college and law school, but that was the first.

JE: About college: After you graduate from high school, where do you go?

GJ: Went to the University of Oklahoma, which is where my father attended college, pledged the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, was very involved in student activities at the University of Oklahoma and was president of my fraternity, but very involved in everything from Model United Nations to sooner scandals to a lot of the student government activities there at the university.

I worked in the office of the Vice President for University Relations and Development. Initially it was John Dean and then later, David Burr, and so I had that opportunity to be exposed to our recruitment; our student relations; our university relations with alumni; the development aspect; fundraising for donors at the University of Oklahoma.

And one of my primary responsibilities was monitoring the legislation that impacted the University of Oklahoma as a senior in high school and then I also had the job my first two years in law school, which, given some of the things I did later as a university president and certainly my time in the legislature, that job ended up being very good training.

Also of some note: Some of the previous individuals who had held that job were Burns Hargis, David Walters, and Dave McCurdy. So there was kind of an interesting trajectory of individuals that held that position.

JE: That position -- was that after you had finished your -- was it during your college?

GJ: It was during college. I applied for it. Usually the position went to someone who was either a senior in graduate school or in law school. So I had the position my last year in college, my senior year, and then my first two years in law school.

Chapter 4 – 4:10

Carl Albert

John Erling (JE): Were you already thinking what your career path could be and what your interest was?

Glen Johnson (GJ): At that point, I would have to say, John, it was on my mind. I mean, I won't say that I had a 10-year plan of "I'm gonna go to Okema. I'm gonna practice law. I'm gonna run for the legislature." I had been exposed to it since a very early age in our time in Washington DC in the 60s. Speaker Albert was a friend of my father's. He was at our place, so I was exposed to it. Just being in Washington with everything going on, you're probably more aware of events than -- you know, you're where the action is. I liked it. I was involved in student government in high school and certainly in college. The position at the university in doing the legislative work certainly helped that along because I got acquainted with many of the legislators on a first name basis. So I would say this: I would say it piqued my interest. I had at that point, an idea that I might do this at some point. I didn't have a plan that it was gonna be in 4 or 5 years. I just -- I had a strong interest.

JE: Carl Albert -- did you have any conversations with him, or was he encouraging you one way or another?

GJ: He was. He was interesting, John, in that even as when I was in grade school, when he would be at our place, he was always interested. "What are you taking? What subjects are you taking?" He would be interested in particularly what type of European history. Very inquisitive and appeared to me, it was genuine in terms of being very interested in what I was doing.

"Well, do you think you're going to be interested in government?" Asking questions like that. I stayed in touch with him. He retired in 1976, but he was at the University of Oklahoma a lot for lectures and things, and we stayed in touch through the years. When I decided in '82 to run for the legislature, I called him. And he said, "Let me know what you need." He said, "I'll be there for events if you need me," and he was on a couple of occasions when we started running ads. He did an ad that was an endorsement ad that definitely helped me because he was well known in the district. So yeah, he was a mentor. He was a mentor from an early age.

JE: You probably didn't realize then how lucky you were.

GJ: Oh, well, you're right. Initially, I mean, I viewed him as a friend of my parents. Obviously, when he was elected speaker in 1970, we were proud. I'd see him on television and realized that he had national stature. During the Watergate era, you remember there were two occasions when there was no vice president where he was the next in line to the presidency on two different times. So, as time moved on, and then as I got more interested in seeking office, I realized what a tremendous guy he was and he really was and just so down to earth, after my election to the legislature. I'd catch a Friday and particularly as I went up the ranks and was appropriations chair and majority leader and Speaker, and I'd drive to McAllister on Friday. He had an office there in the federal building, the Carl Albert Federal Building, and spent a couple of hours with him just chatting, but he was a great resource and just a genuinely great person. I was honored to be a pallbearer at his funeral.

JE: Wow. A man short of stature. How tall -- 5'? What do you think he was?

GJ: Well, they said he was 5'4", and that might have been stretching; he was small. He was very small. The word was that even in high school and as a debater at OU that he had this booming voice and that the minute he started talking, the height did not matter at all.

Chapter 5 – 10:40
First Campaign

John Erling (JE): So let's talk about your first campaign in 1982 and who were you running against and how old were you? Let's start there.

Glen Johnson (GJ): I had just turned 28. I got out of law school in 1979 and went to Okema. I went in with what was my dad's old law firm. His partner from 1939, Dwight Talley, was still practicing. And then his partner and my partner was Larry Parish, who's now the district judge for Okfuskee, Okmulgee, and Creek counties. So I practiced with them, well, the whole time I was in Okema.

Dwight Talley passed away in March of '82, but I ran for my first elective office was actually for a vacancy on the Okema school board, and I can remember. My dad, who didn't give me advice a lot, said, "What are you doing? This isn't exactly -- if you're planning on something else, you're gonna get into all kinds of skirmishes here."

And I said, "Well, I was asked to file and I think it's important." So I did. As it turned out, that gave me an opportunity to meet with school boards all throughout the district to get very involved. Education's always been a passion of mine. It's been the passion in terms of public policy. So it was a great experience for me. And then that was, I ran in 1980 for the Okema School Board, and then I ran for the legislature in 1982.

My opponent was a fellow by the name of Bill Robinson from Holdenville. He had been in office at that point, eight years. So I was running against a four-term incumbent. They had redistricted in '81, which moved the district around and gave more of the, or provided more of the area in what I would say was my part of the district in Okfuskee and Okmulgee counties. My opponent Bill Robinson was in Hughes County, which is Holdenville and Wetumpka, Calvin, Stewart, those communities.

We geared up. It was a fairly intense race, I think would be fair to say, and came out on top. I remember the day it was August 24th, 1982. I had a lot of -- of course, I had a lot of family, so I had a lot of people that hadn't really been involved in politics before that either through associations with my

family, through representing them as a lawyer. A lot of my colleagues from college and law school helped, and we put together a great effort that ended in a victory in August of '82,

JE: And your age again was?

GJ: I just turned 28.

JE: You had family. You had Carl Albert going for you.

GJ: I did.

JE: Your opposition was probably a little upset about all that.

GJ: He didn't embrace it.

JE: And do you remember any certain issue that the two of you may have?

GJ: I certainly tried to navigate that I was going to be very much a pro-education legislator. I want to be fair, he wasn't negative on the issue, but I tried to, through my school board experience and just through what I said, what I planned to do if elected, I tried to make a distinguishing point there.

We had some, I mean, there were some issues on attendance and things like that, but I think, frankly, in my district from a geographic standpoint, John, went from Pittsburgh County and Pontotoc County in the southern and central part of the state, all the way up through Holdenville, Wetumpka, Okema, Walika, Opulgee County, Beggs, Preston, and part of Okmulgee proper to the Tulsa County line. So, I mean, it was geographically a very large district.

My, I mean, my memory is I tried to cover it. I tried to knock on doors. I tried to be very visible and it was, I think as much as anything else, the personal contact is what I can recall going to some homes and knocking on doors and they'd say, "We haven't had anybody here in 10 years, or longer." And so, great anecdotal stories. I had a retired letter carrier in one of the communities that had been retired 10 years. And asked me, he said, "Could you give me 2 days?" And I said, "Well, probably. What do you want?" He's, "Well, I think I just want to go around to the people I know and have you go with me and I'm gonna just—I'm not going to tell them to vote for you. I'm

just going to tell them my experience with you." I checked back after the race, John, and as I recall in those precincts, I received about 88% of the votes. So things like that, that when you start, I didn't know it was going to develop that way, but it did; it worked out.

JE: So you were in the House of Representatives for how long?

GJ: From 1982 to 1996, 14 years. The last 6 years I was Speaker of the House, so I served for 3 terms.

JE: And you were one of the youngest—

GJ: At the time I was elected, I was the youngest in the nation.

JE: And you were how old then?

GJ: I just turned 35.

JE: Youngest in the nation, youngest in the nation to be...?

GJ: Speaker of the House. I was at the time, I didn't realize it, I was elected, and as we were getting ready for the swearing in, the chief clerk and administrator in the house said, "Well, the National Conference of State Legislature has just contacted us and you are, upon your swearing in tomorrow, you will be the youngest sitting Speaker of the House in the country." So, nice distinction.

JE: But then while there you were House Majority floor leader. You were House and Appropriations and Budget Committee chair, House Majority Caucus chair, and House Judiciary Committee chair.

GJ: Correct. Well, I was, candidly, probably one of the events that developed that was helpful. I was selected chair of the Judiciary, John, at the end of my first term, which that normally goes to a much more senior member. I think two factors played into that: I was a lawyer and contrary to a lot of popular belief, there weren't, I probably even, I thought of the 101 House members, you'd have 20 or 30 lawyers, and it turns out, when I was elected, I think there were 8 or 9 in the House, so not nearly as many as you think.

The other, we had a speaker's race at the end of my first year of my first term. I supported Jim Barker, who was elected. And so, by virtue of that change in leadership, I think that probably was one of the reasons I was

offered what was judiciary was a prime committee chair and offered that pretty early in my career. Then I ran for caucus chair. The caucus chair position is one of only 3 that's elected by the members. I held that for 2 terms, and then I was appropriation chair for 2 years and then majority floor leader the year before I ran for speaker. So that was my trajectory in the House of Representatives.

JE: What traits of yours helped you land those positions or your ability to maybe compromise or get along or...?

CJ: Well, I think that helped. I think, I mentioned earlier, but actually both my parents pointed out that, "Just remember as you're in a skirmish that, particularly if it's a collective group, you're gonna be with them the next day too, so don't do things on one day that might not be helpful going forward."

I was certainly always cognizant that you could disagree, but not -- it didn't have to -- it could be agreeably, it could be on good terms, so I never... I tried to always separate the issue from the person and not get wrapped up to the point that there was still not a good relationship there.

I was always cognizant that it was good to be helpful to members, if a member would want me to come to their district to speak for an event or re-election, I always tried to do that within the bounds of what I could do while I still was practicing law and other things.

And so as time moved on, I think, yes, I think I had a reputation for doing my homework -- well-versed on the issues. I think that helped.

And then sometimes events just play into it, the running for speaker, I was the majority floor leader, Cal Hobson took my place as the budget chairman and Steve Lewis was speaker. Steve Lewis announced he was gonna run for governor; and that immediately that set a speaker's race into motion. That race for speaker lasted almost a year from August of '89 till right at the end of the session in '90.

So events play into it, I mean. If Steve Lewis had opted to not run for governor and stayed, remained in his role as Speaker, it might have been several years later, but that was timely for me and I opted to get in. Cal was

my -- Cal Hobson -- was my principal opponent. He was a very worthy opponent, very, very capable.

JE: Are you out hustling people, do you think? Working harder?

GJ: I think that helped. Cal worked hard. I think a lot of it ... I'll just ... was probably approach. Cal was, in my view, one of the most intelligent members that we had in the house. He could be a bit combative. He always said what he felt. I may have been a little bit more diplomatic. I'm just giving you my take on it. I think both of us were well-respected by the membership, but I was candidly. In terms of the political spectrum, I was more moderate, middle of the road progressive. Cal was probably viewed a little bit more towards the liberal end, and I think probably the general view of the house was more -- coincided more with my philosophy.

Chapter 6 – 9:36

HB 1017

Glen Johnson (GJ): We were in the middle of House Bill 1017 and I, as the majority of Florida, my job was to get the votes in the House, which we did, but it was a tough, that was, I mean, it was a very tough issue, who could argue?

I never viewed it as a liberal conservative. I viewed it as a pro-education issue. I viewed it as vital. We unfortunately had a few members lose their seats over the issue, but I look back on my time, John. I think that was probably one of the, one of the focal points, one of the transformational pieces of legislation that I was glad to be involved in and honored to be involved in.

John Erling (JE): Let me just describe what it was, House Bill 1017. It raised taxes to fund major reforms in public education, including higher teacher pay, smaller classes, statewide standards, and new programs for students. So when you read that, who could be against it? And so was it the taxes, raising taxes that became an issue?

GJ: It was.

JE: And we've been having this discussion. We'd like people to know that you are a Democrat. And had the Democrats been running the state or had the Republicans started to move in?

GJ: Well, no, in 1990, we, the Democrats, have been in the majority since statehood, so the change occurred about 12 years later, I think the House changed parties. My recollection is in 2004, and then the Senate followed suit in 2000 -- well, they tied in '06 and then in '08, the parties changed, so it was still Democrat.

But frankly, and I tried to do this on every issue that I had when I was speaker it was not a party line vote. Again, there were more Democrats than Republicans, but we had, in my view, significant Republican support -- quite candidly, a lot, a number of them from the Tulsa area.

Yes, that was very real. I think John Bryant, Rob Johnson, Bill Veitch, I mean, I still remember they were very, very supportive of the 1017.

JE: But I do remember Senator Charlie Ford was against it.

GJ: He was, and others, and frankly, there were some Democrats that didn't support it.

JE: We should say that Henry Bellmon, a Republican, ended up signing it. So, again, the opposition, was it because of the taxes?

GJ: I think so. And I might add to your comment, John: we wouldn't have had 1017 without Henry Bellmon. Henry Bellmon provided, in my view, extraordinary leadership on that issue, and stayed very engaged and hooked up on it even when it became tough.

But no, to your question, why would there be opposition? There were some that if we'd gone through with the oil downturn in the mid 80s, oil went from \$43 a barrel down to \$11 a barrel because of our dependence at that time, which was even more than now on energy and oil production, created huge gaps in our budget, like \$300 million dollar shortfalls.

You look at what you would call that to provide revenue just to stay even, you're gonna have to come up with 250 or 350 million. Yes, you could say it's a tax increase. The flip side is you're investing in education to provide for

smaller class sizes, which all the data showed if the teacher or student experience involves more one on one experiences, the learning opportunity is gonna be enhanced. Teacher pay, getting it to the regional average, having more emphasis on the core curriculum. I mean, all that was the, basically the crux of House Bill 1017, but for those that weren't for it, the fact that there was a revenue increase involved, that was the reason they did not support it.

JE: But when you look at this, compared to what's actually happening today in our state: higher teacher pay, smaller classes, statewide standards, new programs for students, some of that may be, well, right now, I believe Oklahoma ranks near the bottom, even in teacher pay. So what happened?

GJ: Well, I think through the years, segments of it were amended, times changed, philosophies changed. I will say this, and I do need to say it and believe it: I believe what we did at the time there in 1989, 1990 was, it was absolutely the right thing to do. I think it was needed and necessary, and I think it positioned us at that time very well visa vis other states. Again, times change, circumstances change, those in the leadership positions change, and as a result, nothing is forever, but I look back on that and have never had any regrets about strongly supporting House Bill 1017.

JE: And let me just interject here. Henry came to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and he signed it at my wife, Margaret's, school: Marshall Elementary. Margaret was the principal and State Superintendent Sandy Garrett actually selected Marshall for the signing.

GJ: She was standing right there. Yes, she was, and I was standing on the other side, and we still have a picture of that in her office as a matter of fact, that's how important it was.

GJ: And that's in Henry Bellmon's book. Do you know that picture is in Henry Bowman's book?

JE: It is?

GJ: Yeah. No, I mean, I was there for that. I mean, I think his leadership was crucial, and he brought some people to the table. You may remember the name Pete Silas, who at that time was chairman of the board of Phelps Petroleum -- very involved in the effort. Joe Williams with the Williams Companies in Tulsa, extremely involved, and Governor Bellmon brought

them to the forefront. The Tulsa World was a critical player and a key player on House Bill 1017. Alex Adwan, of course, Bob Lorton, Ken Neal, David Avril, they were vocal and it mattered. So, it was a good effort. And then as you recall, John, the next year in '91, there was an effort to repeal it. So we, to some degree, we had to reignite the campaign again and go around the state to make sure that the state question to repeal House Bill 1017 did not get off the ground, and it didn't. We were able to successfully stave off the repeal effort.

JE: Right. I've interviewed Henry Bellmon for Voices of Oklahoma. You saw him work and negotiate probably. And of course, he was that low-key sort of person, and you could describe and talk about him as you were around him.

CJ: My feelings about Governor Bellmon changed as time moved on. I, upon his election, didn't know him. Turns out one of my roommates in college from Tulsa, Rob Gardner, his dad Roy Gardner was police and fire commissioner in Tulsa and had been the regional director for HUD in Tulsa, and he and Governor Bellmon were close. So that was my initial connection.

Governor Bellmon said, "Your son, Roy Gardner, is a good friend of mine, his son's a good friend of yours." And so, we started working together. I actually was the appropriations chair during the middle of his time, and we worked together on budget matters.

As time moved on, I just gained more and more respect for his leadership style, his integrity. I particularly respected him, John. He didn't really listen to the political winds. And I mean, you look at his career. In the US Senate, he voted for the Panama Canal. I mean, he had a pretty -- I think it'd be fair to say -- a pretty gutsy voting record in the US Senate. And he brought that here.

I mean, his first year, he looked at the numbers, we were still in an economic downturn. He said, "We're going to have to have some revenue here to operate the state." So, I respected him for kind of calling it like he saw them. He was certainly -- his principles were conservative, but, on 10-17, just an example, he saw the need, and I think he was not concerned at all about what the political consequences were going to be for him. He

saw the need and saw that we need to do it. And for that, he has then and so has my great respect. I think he's one of the great governors we had in Oklahoma.

When I was president of Southeastern, I had him come to my -- I taught a class there every other semester -- had him come on a couple of different occasions and he was delightful. He'd spend the night and I said, "I'll get up when you get up, Governor," and he said, "Well, I get up pretty early." I said, "You just tell me and I'll get up." Well, he got up like at 4 in the morning, so I had, I had a couple mornings there that was a couple hours ahead of my normal routine, but he was -- he was a farm boy all the way through. But, in my view, a great Oklahoman.

JE: There have been many people who have said, "I wish we had a Henry Bellmon here today, 2026."

Chapter 7 – 11:40

Southeastern OK University

John Erling (JE): OK, about being president. That means you've elected, you've chosen to leave elective office. All right. Did you ever think you wanted to run statewide for the positions that could be statewide?

Glen Johnson (GJ): There was some discussion, John, in '93. Governor Walters was, I mean, towards the end of his first term, and there was some discussion about looking at the governor's race in '94, as it turned out. Those that ultimately got into the race were Jack Mildren and Bernice Shedrick, and I believe one of my colleagues, Representative Danny Williams from Seminole.

I might have looked at it a bit. I had the members encouraging me to run for a third term as Speaker. It seemed like things were going well. So, I want to be candid and straight. I probably gave it some thought, not a lot. And opted to go for the 3rd term.

I then went to -- I actually had a year at OU right after the legislature. I

taught at the law school and it was coincided with President Warren leaving the US Senate to go to OU and then I've just been there 6 months and Southeastern, they had their presidency open and I had several call and encouraged me to apply there, and that's kind of what got me on that track.

JE: So you're president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant. 1997 to 2006.

CJ: Right.

JE: This is a whole new ballgame, isn't it?

CJ: It is.

JE: When you arrive in Durant, what's your first impression? What were some of the challenges you faced?

CJ: Well, I did have a connection. Melinda and I married in 1993 when I was Speaker -- my wife Melinda; and Melinda earned her undergraduate degree at Southeastern. So she was an alum, an alumna. She played basketball for Southeastern and I was still very connected to the community and had a lot of friends. So there was an additional motivation.

As a separate part, I had made the decision to move to higher ed when I went to OU and I think probably I had a contact and there was some interest in me looking at it. I mean, the skill set for being a president of the university at that time was evolving. Obviously there was a traditional view that was going through academic ranks, but really nationwide, more and more emphasis on fundraising, communications, outreach with alumni -- all of which were things that I felt like I had some ability there, but I also knew I was not going to be a traditional candidate, so I embraced that.

During my interview, I said, "If you, I'm looking at what I see there and I see a great regional university. I see a university that was founded in 1909 and this is 1997, your buildings were built at that time and they're 90 years old now. There's going to need to be a major overhaul from the physical structure of the campus, but more importantly than that, we've got to be up to speed in terms of accreditation."

One of the first things I did, aided by John Massey's endowed chairs in the

School of Business, but we sought the second level of accreditation for the College of Business. The level that everyone has is ACBSP. The second level is AACBSP, which at that point was only attained by University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, and University of Tulsa, so immediately I branched out to do something that at that point no other regional had done, but looking at raising, frankly, the standards of the school business, bringing with the endowed chairs that Regent Massey gave us, bringing in faculty from other institutions, sometimes larger institutions, it all kind of just fell in place.

US News and World Report named us -- there in around 2000 -- the top regional university in the state has started a pretty ambitious fundraising effort. We raised money to build, renovate our biological sciences building, to build new classroom buildings, new residence halls, an arena and convocation center, renovating the football stadium, new public safety complex, all in that 7 or 8 year period. And it was a very focused effort in terms of more private fundraising and we greatly enhanced that.

But also things, John, like establishing a president's leadership class -- there was not one -- and teaching a class every other semester. I loved being president of Southeastern. It was a great opportunity. I think we accomplished a lot in that time period and they were gracious enough to name me President Emeritus when I became chancellor, so I still stay very engaged when they built the student union there, which I was involved in raising the money for, they in 2010 named the student union for me.

JE: The money that was raised -- \$85 million campaign -- it's a lot of money.

GJ: It's a lot of money.

JE: Beyond the alumni association and all that. And so where did largely your money come from?

GJ: Well, a variety of sources. Certainly the alumni stepped up as they've never had some of that involved grantsmanship both at the state and federal level, leveraging opportunities with foundations. I mean, it really covered the waterfront at the time we built the new residence halls.

We renovated the old halls which in the late '60s were named Choctaw and Chickasaw Tower and for the renovation, I talked to Chief Pyle was the

chief of the Choctaws at that time and Governor Annatubby, who's still the governor of Chickasaw Nation, said, "This is kind of reverse deal usually. We asked for the money and then named the towers after you already named it after you, but we're asking for the money now to renovate them," and they thought that was kind of a nice concept.

I think, to answer your question, it was a variety of sources and they -- oftentimes -- we had to leverage them and match here and there, but private foundations, federal, state, alumni and grants, it all came together to allow us to do that.

JE: So here you come in as a former state legislator. And you have to interact with the faculty and sometimes faculty probably thinks you need to come out of academia and not an elected official. Did -- any of that?

CJ: Well, there was probably initially, John, there was probably some -- maybe a bit of a rub there. I'll tell you what I did. I, immediately upon arriving on campus, I started going to the faculty lounge and having coffee with them. I would ask for time at their faculty Senate meetings to come in, I think we had one thing that in retrospect was helpful, we had a site visit from our accrediting agency in those days it was the North Central Association. Now it's called the Higher Learning Commission, and so we had to do a site visit on shared governance and what that allowed me to do was get in there, sleeves rolled up, working very closely because we need to be prepared when they came for what was a 4-day site visit. So I think that gave me a chance for exposure early on. I mean, I don't want to belabor it. We had a great relationship. When I left to become Chancellor in January of 2007, the faculty gave me a grandfather clock as a going away present from their personal funds. So I always got that, still have that on display today.

JE: All right, we're tracking it. What age are you about here now when you became president?

CJ: When I became president of Southeastern, I was 43.

JE: So you could have other faculty members who are about the same age, probably?

CJ: And some older.

JE: Any particular student stories or experiences out of being there that you remember?

GJ: Well, yeah, we lived on campus, which I thought was great. Melinda was teaching in the Durant system, so we were very engaged. We'd have events 3 nights a week, sometimes 4 nights a week at our house -- had a big backyard, which was great.

You know, the usual by proximity to campus, periodically, the deal was to ring the president's doorbell at midnight. Melinda and I just, we always have stayed up late. So, on this given night, it rang and I was at the door in about 20 seconds and they were standing there going, "What do we do now? We didn't think; we'd usually we have time to make our exit here."

I said, "Come on in, let's talk. Let's talk about why we're doing this," so we had a great experience there.

Another, under the category of "you can't make it up," we built the new student union. And it's -- obviously I'm not completely objective -- but it's a great structure and a great facility, so we were gonna do the lighting, have a lighting ceremony to light it up, and I had been selected as chancellor, so I was here in Oklahoma City. They were gonna do it like on a Tuesday at dusk, and as it turned out, we had something in my role as chancellor out of the Capitol.

So I called them and I said, "Let's reschedule." So they did well then the second time something came up again. I said, "Why don't we just do this: Why don't we have the student body president? I'm good with that. Just let them light the student union."

And so I'm actually at the Capitol and I get a call from the physical plant director at Southeastern, who I hired when I was there, and he goes, "I want you to hear this before you hear it from somebody else." He said they, about 5 minutes ago, hit the button to light the on the student union and he said two of the lighting packages malfunctioned and all that lit up instead of "Glen D. Johnson Student Union" all that lit up was "Glen D. Johnson stud."

JE: (Laughing)

GJ: Well you can imagine the student reaction to that. And he said, he goes, "I just wanted to call you." He goes, "I hope you're not upset."

I go, "Why would I be upset? I think this is hilarious." I said, "In fact, I can't wait to tell Melinda," and he said, "Well," he said, and he laughed, "If I've been trying to do it, I never could have done it."

I go, "I get that." So then I started getting texts and phone calls, "You're not gonna believe what just happened on campus."

And so somebody took a picture of it and then our friend John Massey, who was on the state regents at that time gets hold of it. I have no idea this is going on at our next full regents meeting. The media's there, everything's at our conference room downstairs. We start the meeting and John, first order of business, had secured a picture of that "Glen D. Johnson stud," framed them, and gave all nine regents a copy of it. So we had some fun with it.

JE: Absolutely (Chuckling).

Chapter 8 – 12:16

Chancellor

John Erling (JE): OK, you've been talking about Chancellorship, so let's move into that. The Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education came about in 2007. What does that state system do and how many state colleges and universities and budget allocations and all that kind of thing?

Glen Johnson (GJ): Well, it's a -- and I need to say this -- I thoroughly enjoyed my 10 years at Southeastern. I was not looking for another opportunity. It was a very familiar environment for Melinda. I loved everything that was going on, but I kind of saw this as a job that if you're asked to look at it, you should, and so I did. We have a unique system of higher-ed structure and coordination in Oklahoma because all 25 of the public colleges and universities, John, are under this one coordinated system: the state

regents. So University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University, the 11 regionals, the Northeastern, Southeastern, Southwestern, Northwestern, East Central, UCO. The 12 two-year community colleges, the large ones like TCC and OCCC, Rose State to the smaller ones in our state are all under a coordinated system that the state regents are constitutionally designated to provide coordination; and then the chancellor is the CEO of that system.

Whether it's the approval of an academic program, the regents are designated through the chancellor to make the budget request for the entire system -- over a billion dollars each year -- and then the regents allocate -- the money comes from the legislature and governor to the state region chancellor in a lump sum; and then they allocate that money to the 25 colleges and universities, and the medical schools, and all the health science-related institutional entities, so it's a big job.

You coordinate academic programs. The budget, I would argue, is probably the most critical point. We administer the OneNet Communication System, which not only coordinates all of higher ed and a lot of our K-12 system, but career tech, hospitals, libraries.

And I was honored back in '93 when we did the higher ed bond issue to put the original \$13 million into that bond issue to start what ultimately became OneNet a few years later because there was a feeling we needed to get out in front on this telecommunication effort at that point.

We administer scholarships -- essentially every aspect of coordinating the state system.

As Chancellor, you're the chief spokesperson for the system. One of the issues that was front and center every year: the issue of weapons on campus. And I'm proud again I certainly understand and believe in the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms. I don't believe they have any place on a college campus, and every year we were able to successfully stop legislation that would have authorized the carrying of weapons on our college campuses, and I'm proud that we did that.

We engaged with our campuses on active shooter exercises and things like that where our campuses would be prepared if, indeed, something like

that would happen.

There are issues like that that are non-budget related, but everything from free speech issues to a variety of other issues that during the session occupies quite a bit of the chancellor's time. As you're also -- or the person in that role -- is advocating for the budget request for the system and the 25 colleges and universities, so it's a very comprehensive job.

I served on several national boards, which I think was helpful in terms of keeping Oklahoma front -and-center on some of the cutting edge issues nationally and was honored to serve in that role for, I think, 14 years and 11 months -- so right at 15 years.

JE: There's a lot of competition for the money. And let's talk a bit about Oklahoma University, Oklahoma State University, and they're coming at you with "this is what we want." And I'm sure that's a good story because if you give -- I'm just gonna say -- if you give a million dollars to them, you've got to give a million dollars to them. It's got to be equal-equal, and was it always?

CJ: So I think the answer -- the correct answer to that -- is it wasn't always dollar-for-dollar equal. There has been an effort, and I think part of our responsibility as a system is, to provide for an equal distribution with the lens that, whether you're a student at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton or the University of Oklahoma, that student's entitled to a solid quality education.

Obviously where the differences come in is your general education courses do not cost as much as a medical program course at Oklahoma State University, or University of Oklahoma, or optometry at Northeastern; and so you've got to build into your calculation all of those factors to be fair.

And so you have an environment, John, where, I mean, I'm saying this as a person who wore the university president hat for 10 years. I always thought that Southeastern was not being treated completely fair by the state regents and chancellor. So that's part of being a good president.

On the other hand, I think the responsibility to be equal, but to acknowledge that your courses don't cost the same, there may be a year

where if Oklahoma State University has a food processing facility that needs to be funded and the University of Oklahoma doesn't or has a medical program that in pediatrics it needs to be funded where those dollars don't match dollar for dollar, that's just the way it shakes out sometime.

But I think an effort is made to be as equal and as fair as you can be given all the nuances to the system. You don't always get there, but I always tried to do that under the guise and with the feeling that every student's entitled to a quality education within our higher-ed system and I think to a large degree we were able to do that. And my colleague and my successor Sean Burrige, the current chancellor, I think still has that same philosophy, and I think he's doing a very good job discharging that responsibility.

JE: Who are the presidents of OU and OSU during your tenure?

GJ: Well, during my tenure as chancellor, David Boren was president the entire time. That, well, I take that back. He was president until my last two years as chancellor when Joe Harris came in. Burns Hargis, when I was first named chancellor, David Schmidly was the president. He left within 1 year and there was an interim Dr Marlene Strait for about a year. And then Burns Hargis became president in '08 and he was president during the rest of my time as chancellor. So for most of that, my fifteen-year period, I spent 90% to 95% of my time working with President David Boren at OU and President Burns Hargis at OSU.

JE: I'd like to get into the weeds -- the mechanics of this -- these two presidents. Both of them strong personalities and very strong abilities. How do they ask for the appropriation? I mean, is there an in-person meeting and are they in there lobbying ... and how does that work?

GJ: Well, the way I always structured it -- and of course, as you would know, John, and you can imagine, we had a lot of informal meetings; but I always structured it where -- and not just the two of them for the entire system. The state regents spent two, sometimes two-and-a-half days going over in some detail the budget of every institution.

We asked the president to be there. They always were. Understandably, the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University, we gave them a bit

more time and it was very interactive. It was not a slideshow: "Well, here's what we're doing and I've got to go to my next meeting." It was very ... we would have their presentations in advance, a lot of back and forth, a lot of good questions. I think by the end of that process -- and we would visit with them twice, at the beginning and as we got towards the end; and then again, after the money was allocated, we would have another meeting where they would come in to say, "Based on the allocation, here's how we plan to spend the money."

So it was on the front end of them making the request of what they needed and I'll just say: we never would request everything they asked for part of our job was to get th-- I mean, if we just simply combined all the requests and submitted them, the budget request to the legislature would be astronomical.

Part of our job is to get it within the bounds of, I mean, as an example, if you've got a budget year where we know there's gonna be a flat budget or even a 1 or 2% cut, that's not the year you come in with a \$800 million dollar increase request, because it's not gonna happen, so...

You lose your credibility with the legislature if you, in that environment, maybe ask for a system-wide \$120 million, you may end up even getting a third of that or something, but it's a lot of that are the dynamics involved in how to strategically put your best foot forward where the legislature is not saying, "Are you out of your mind?" But on the other hand, our responsibility is to legitimately state the needs of the system and I often would be in there, even when there was going to be a budget cut, and I would say, "We understand that you have less money than you did a year ago, but our job constitutionally is to tell you what our needs are, and we understand if you're not going to be able to fund all of them, but we need to tell you what those needs are and this is what our budget request represents."

JE: Was the legislature always a fan of education?

CJ: Well, I think I would -- again, I want to be accurate and fair and responding. I think there have been times where they've been bigger fans. I think there's always been a core group that understands how vitally important all three levels of education -- higher-ed, K-12, and career tech.

Frankly, there was a period probably in the mid 2000s where it seemed like we were bogging down more on issues that weren't necessarily related to funding education more -- and I'm not saying they're not important -- more the nuts and bolts of what was going on within the systems.

But I think historically you've had a good core group and particularly in the leadership of the House and Senate that understands whatever we want to be as a state is gonna be driven by having a solid educational system that's properly funded and having a pattern for job growth that fits the needs of our state of which you're not going to be able to fill the jobs in a state if you're not producing graduates that can fill those jobs in the high need areas like engineering and teachers and medical profession, things of that nature.

Chapter 9 – 16:00 Accomplishments

John Erling (JE): You resigned as chancellor in 2021. Then what did you do?

Glen Johnson (GJ): I originally kind of looked at my career; my two passions had been education and public service and felt like I'd had a really a great opportunity in both arenas, as a member of the legislature, legislative leader, speaker, teaching at the law school at OU, being a university president, certainly being system head and chancellor.

I was really gonna just look at retirement. I had, shortly after I retired, the Chickasaw Nation contacted me and wanted to create a situation where I would work with them on various projects, some education-related and otherwise, so I did that.

Then within a month or two, I think our mutual friend Cliff Hudson called me and Cliff, when he was chair and CEO of Sonic and sold Sonic to Arby's, Cliff became of counsel with Crowe Dunlevy Law Firm, the oldest firm in the state, and Cliff indicated, he said, "I think they would like to talk to you."

And I said, "Cliff, I mean, I practice law. I'm not --" and he said, "Well, I kind

of had the same feeling, but I think you should come down and talk with him."

Well, long and short, had two or three meetings of which Cliff was involved in and made the decision to go with Crowe Dunlevy as a director in December of 2022. So that's now been 3 years and 3 months. I've really enjoyed it. I'm the—we have 38 practice groups, every area from aviation, to real estate, to energy, to health care, to environment, litigation, governmental relations and regulatory.

I chair governmental relations and regulatory and have really enjoyed that experience. I mean, it's one that I candidly didn't know whether or not at this stage that would fit again, but it has.

So between serving as a director with Crowe Dunlevy, the work with the Chickasaw Nation, which I thoroughly enjoy, I'm still on a lot of boards. I'm on the Oklahoma Hall of Fame board, Oklahoma Educational Television Foundation, Epworth Villa, a continuum of care group in Edmond. I'm very proud to serve on that board. I'm on the Higher Ed Heritage Society Hall of Fame Board. I'm on the Massey Family Foundation board in Durant and a number of others that I enjoy that service and I think that service is important.

So as far as "am I enjoying life," I definitely am. Melinda tells me I get an "F" in retirement, but at some point I may move to a little more, but I don't know when I will.

JE: I don't think you could.

GJ: OK, I think you're probably right.

JE: When you look back on your career, what accomplishments jump out at you as maybe you're the most proud of?

GJ: Let me start with my law practice in Okema.

I always enjoyed smaller community, but whether it's preparing a will or representing a couple on a matter where they feel like they may not have been treated fairly, I always really enjoyed... I got -- I received a lot of satisfaction from that.

I enjoyed my school board experience tremendously in the legislature. I don't want to belabor House Bill 1017, but that was a threshold issue for me and I felt very strongly about it.

I had other bills, John, I authored at the request of Robert Henry when he was Attorney General, the Drug-Free School Zone bill, which indicated there were parameters of which where the school zone could not be invaded for any reason.

I authored in the mid 90s with Senator Ted Fisher and Senator Bob Cullison and my colleague, Don McCorkel, the Quality Jobs bill, which you look back, it's still working 30 years later. If the company can demonstrate that what they plan to do in way of expansion will generate these additional jobs, then we provide incentives that allow them to do that; but the revenue generated by the job far exceeds what the state incentive was, and that model has worked with really just a few modifications very well, 30 years later.

We had to navigate the difficult terrain with the downturn in the oil industry. A lot of economic recovery measures, changes in the healthcare system with coming up with a workable medical provider fee and things like that -- some of them not high profile but important in terms of...

I look back on my time as Speaker and some of the reforms that we initiated that I felt strongly about. I always was concerned about our image and when we would have the all night sessions in my early years of the legislature, there'd always be somebody at 3 in the morning that would close their eyes and a picture would be taken.

So when I became speaker, we just said there would be -- and I worked with Steve Lewis on a number of these -- no more all-night sessions. If you brought retirement bills out for a vote, you had to have an actuarial study on the member's desk a week ahead of time. A bill had to lay over 24 hours before you could vote on it after it came out of committee where there wasn't a surprise element rushing it all the way through in a matter of hours.

One of the issues I was very proud of was proportionate representation on legislative committees in the House. When I became Speaker, appropriations for example, I had 30 members. In those days, the Democrats were the majority party, but the Republicans had a third of the House, but only 3 members on appropriations. Arguably, if you're gonna do the percentage, it ought to be 10%, and I did that. There was some consternation initially. But it subsided and it seemed to me that things like that were just the fair thing to do, the right thing to do, appointing leadership positions or the minority party, things like that that I just look back on. I think it's probably always ... "if you can strive to be fair."

When I was in the legislature, through the work of a number of individuals, including Senator Maxine Horner from Tulsa, we passed the Oklahoma's Promise Scholarship Program for students. It provided if you were, if your parents met the income levels, if you made your grades, if you presented no disciplinary problems, you met the criteria in terms of the courses that needed to be taken for college admission and if you accomplished all those things and met that criteria, the state would provide you with a scholarship that paid your tuition -- not fees, not any of the other expense but tuition.

And at this point, I'm proud of the fact we administered that program for nearly 15 years as Chancellor of the state higher education system, a program I had a hand in passing in the legislature back in 1992 and 1993. The program has provided scholarships for over 100,000 students in Oklahoma at this point, so I think it has stood the test of time. More as-importantly or even more importantly, it has provided in many ways that bridge or lifeline to students who, without the scholarship, they likely could not have been able to attend college and graduate from college, so it's been a very, very significant program.

JE: And let me just add, because I've interviewed Maxine Horner for Voices of Oklahoma, and she said some of those students actually came back to serve in the legislature.

CJ: Yeah, absolutely. I think of one serving right now, the minority leader in the House, Representative Cyndi Munson from Lawton was a very proud recipient of the Oklahoma Scholars program -- many, many others.

We've done profiles not only in public service, but in many fields they've gone on to earn degrees in the medical field, in the legal arena, certainly. It spans from architecture to journalism, they have exceeded really in numerous areas, so the scholarship has been transformational and certainly I'm very proud of that.

Another program I was proud of going back again to my time as Speaker of the House, we had a bond issue for higher education in 1993 and we thought it would be important; the digital age was emerging. It was still in its infancy in 1993, but several of us in the legislature and Governor Walters thought that we needed to begin a process of -- particularly in higher education -- having a plan that began to involve us in the digital age where we were not a bystander but a participant.

A result of that was an initial amount of \$14 million that was put into the bond issue in 1993 that became the linchpin and the beginning of the OneNet telecommunication system administered by the state regents.

So as chancellor, I administered that program for 15 years. It provides a connection and telecommunication network for all of our colleges and universities, for many of our K-12 schools, for career tech, for hospitals, for libraries and has been a vital communication link in the digital age.

Again, we, in 1993, and I don't pretend to say we knew what it would be, here 33 years later. I do say that we felt it was an area and an initiative much like AI today. We felt like if we didn't get out and attempt to get in front of it, we would be reacting and not having a plan that was a forward thinking plan; so I'm very, very pleased about that.

I want to comment as far as accomplishments, John, just on funding for higher education during my time. During my 15 years, we had years where we had increases in the budget. We had years where we had reductions. My job as chancellor, one of the jobs is to be the primary or chief spokesperson for the system. So I had the responsibility to advocate for the needs of higher education, which is a constitutional responsibility.

It provides in our state constitution that the state regents and, by extension, the chancellor, must present and advocate for the specific

needs of our state's higher education system and I took that responsibility very seriously, not only when we're able to allocate funds when we had increases to targeted programs -- to programs we felt could move the needle on more college degrees, addressing the job needs of our businesses in this state, and the right priorities such as providing for more teachers, and more doctors in areas, and more engineers in areas where we had a need in those areas.

So all of those things I felt was very important and I think it was just as important, John, as we had additional money where we could allocate that money to priorities in the years where there were reductions to very strategically look at that as well where we understood that there needed to be flexibility. There certainly needed to be understanding as we structured a budget, but as you made those reductions, we didn't always make those across the board in an effort to preserve the quality of the academic product at our colleges and universities for our students.

And I think I would just stay in summation, as I look at programs like the adult degree completion initiative that I had a large hand in as chancellor where we encouraged adults to come back and complete their degree -- they may have stopped out for a variety of reasons -- all of those, one: put students 1st. Two: I think we're geared towards our overall goal of producing more college graduates.

We know the states that have a higher percentage of their citizens with college degrees to a state, or the states that have higher per-capita incomes and more diversified economies, and that's where we wanted to be. It's where we continue to want to be, and will be, in the state of Oklahoma; and I tried to look at the things that we did as an effort to move us forward with those objectives: a quality academic product at an affordable cost and initiatives that met the job needs and the academic needs -- not only of our college universities -- but ultimately of our students and the citizens in the state.

JE: Yup. OK. Then we come to the final question: How would you like to be remembered?

CJ: Well, OK. That's a threshold question. I hope I'm remembered as someone that kept his word. Someone whose word was his bond. I hope I'm

remembered as someone who did not move with the winds of the day -- the political and otherwise.

I think I may have mentioned earlier in this interview that my father told me at an early age it's OK to go against the crowd and go against the grain if you strongly believe that what you're doing is the right thing to do; and I've tried to stay with that. That's served me pretty well.

So I look on it as if you, at the end of your life, if you're able to say that you've got a significant number of friends that have been with you from the beginning through the good times and the hard times -- of which we know there'll be both -- and if you have a solid family relationship, a belief in a faith that is equally solid...

If you're able to engage in matters, not necessarily as an elected official, you can be involved in important things without -- and I found this out since I've left elective office -- without being an elected official. In fact, in many ways you can impact the outcome in some instances even more.

So I hope when whoever would do so would look back on my career they would say: I kept my word. I tried to always work towards achieving a good result and a right result, and that I understood that in doing that you don't have to compromise your principles, but that, when the day is over, I would hope they'd say that I embraced initiatives that have moved our state forward and certainly in that context, helped our country.

Because when it's all said and done, you wanna look back and feel like you've had an impact on making things better. I hope, when it's all said and done, that others would say that I did.

JE: Well, as we've reviewed your career, you certainly have made Oklahoma a better state. So Glen, thank you for your time and for contributing this to Voices of Oklahoma. I appreciate it very much. Thank you.

GJ: My pleasure to be with you, John.

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