



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Ronald McGregor

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

MAIDEN: First, let me say that this is Nell Maiden and I am interviewing Ron McGregor who lives at 721 Massachusetts Avenue NE. Ron has lived here on Capitol Hill since 1968.

Ron, how was the neighborhood different when you moved here than it is now?

MCGREGOR: Well, to begin with, 1968 was a very, very unusual year. It was the year in which MLK was killed and the riots occurred in Washington. My wife and I were living in NW, and we had made a decision that upon my retirement in 1968 we would live in the city. And we began looking for a place to live in July upon my retirement. And we visited 125 different places. We came up on Capitol Hill and looked at some places on 7th Street behind the Capitol Hill Hospital. While we were standing there looking at this house, a man came up to us and said, "I am Austin Beale, and I am a member of the Congressional Realty Company. I think you had better come over to our office; we'll sit down and talk to you if you are interested in getting a house on the Hill."

The Congressional Office, at the corner of Massachusetts, Constitution and 8th Street, was in the home of Inez and John Jones. We sat and talked to the two of them and they said "Well, we would like very much to show you some houses here, and we would like to introduce you to some other realtors, so you can make some comparisons." Which they did.

When we got here, we found everybody in the Real Estate [business] was friendly and they knew each other well. We met a number of realtors and real estate sales persons. We spent about 30, maybe 40 days looking at houses on the Hill. We elected, after a few meetings, that we would settle on the Hill. We wanted to be inside of the Capitol Hill Historic Region of the City, as it's defined in the statute. NE, SE, or SW was not important. It was just to be inside the dimensions of Capitol Hill. We looked at... I said earlier that we had looked at 125 homes, and then we looked at about 30 houses on Capitol Hill. We elected to go with, as our realtor, Congressional Realty.

As a family, my wife Lois, my daughter Jane, and I were most comfortable with the Jones'. Mr. Beale, our original contact, had departed on a trip that he had organized for himself and other friends down to his home at Rehoboth. So we had some time to be squired around the Hill to look at houses with Mrs. Jones and her husband.

After looking at many homes, we were sort of focusing on 721 Mass. We were at the point when somebody had to make a decision. Lois and I, man and wife, were not ready to make a decision. I've no reason why, but Jane just piped up in the middle of the conversation and said, "Let's take this house." So, we took this house at 721 Mass Ave, NE.

At that time, in this square block that is bounded by Mass. Avenue, 8th Street and NE A Street and 7th Street, there was more than 70% black occupancy. The greatest change to the present is that now, there is only about 10% African-American occupancy in this square block.

There were many things that drove the change. Most of all, the movement of the political arena—particularly the lawyer side of the political arena—moved close to Capitol Hill when the George Washington [ed: Georgetown] Law School created its law school on Judiciary Square. Judiciary Square is close enough for students to walk back and forth. There were a lot of available, small one-bedroom basement apartments and the students were willing to move in.

After we had settled in our house, the first thing we did was to do something with the basement. It was a two-bedroom place of about 935 sq. feet, which was quite a reasonable space. We rented it unfurnished to a young married couple, both in the law school at GW [ed: Georgetown]. After they finished their graduate work, they went down to Atlanta, Georgia. But at this time we had become aware of new population, a young population coming to the Hill.

At the same time, this was going on, very dear friends of ours lived on 7th Street between Constitution and NE A. Their two children were ready to go to high school. They wanted to go to the suburbs, so they moved away from the Hill to the suburbs but did not sell their house. They rented it until the boys were out of university and gone off somewhere else. That was in the early 80's. At the time they rented, Mr. and Mrs. Morrison came out to keep the place alive. But, in the meantime, they rented to law students. While this was going on, they had one generation moving in and another generation moving out. And I think that was probably characteristic of almost every block within the historic zone.

We were happy living across the street from the Hospital, Capitol Hill Hospital. There was an incident in the Capitol when a Senator had a heart attack. They all of a sudden realized that they had to call an ambulance and go all the way across town to get to the closest hospital. So they appropriated enough money to make the Capitol Hill Hospital tops in cardiac medicine and treatment. When that happened, it brought a new element to our community. There started to be small, two- or three-doctor establishments around the hospital.

At the same time, the old theater had been rebuilt and that was filled up with doctors attached to Capitol Hill Hospital

MAIDEN: Now, where is the theater? What are you referring to there?

MCGREGOR: The theater on Pennsylvania Avenue.

So this is another impulse that changed the character of the place. I was traveling up to Alaska quite a bit at that time. When I got back from one trip, Lois told me “an Indian family,” a physician from India, wanted to buy our house. They had a big bundle of cash. “Do we want to sell it?” I said, “Not really. We don’t want to go through that again.” They wanted to get into this location. He was a cardiologist and wanted to be close by. He went into the group in the old theater building. Later, he went out to the Washington Hospital. Center, which subsequently bought the Capitol Hill Hospital.

The physicians who built the cardiology unit and gave the hospital its strength started to find other hospital associations. Our family doctor was associated with Sibley, George Washington, and Southeast. He moved from his office only a block and a half away, and it is now a two-mile trip to get to him. This kind of flexibility and motion went on until... well, it’s still going on.

The character of the place changed from a person buying a very inexpensive piece of property that was in pretty sad shape and doing a renovation himself or herself. There became, during this same period of time, a growth industry called Renovation.

MAIDEN: Now, what period of time are you talking about?

MCGREGOR: Maybe, 1976—started in 1976. A couple of architects and a couple of engineering men got together as architect/contractors and they started here on the Hill. Then they moved on out to the suburbs, and still do work here on the Hill. Instead of a house renovation being a labor of love of a couple, it became an industry. And now there are many of these organizations with various names. Contractors who were on the Hill in the 60’s were Wentworth and Levine, Juenemann, Inc., etc.

So, it became an active place to live. We belonged to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) and the Garden Club. We were involved in all the transactions that went on. We got involved in zoning and those kind of actions. We became involved with the changes in the city as it became its own government. We were here when the vote came and the mayor was established as a position and the council and the ANC’s. So, there was a lot of dynamics. There were buildings being built all around us that attracted people. Presently, Ashcroft lives on the Hill. The President’s mouthpiece, Ari Fleisher, is that his public relations man? Congressman Boxer just bought a house between 6th & 7th on NE A. There are a lot of staffies here because things were quite inexpensive for a long time.

I bought my house for \$68,000. They’re building houses across the street from me now that are going for between \$550,000 and \$750,000.

MAIDEN: How many square feet? The same?

MCGREGOR: I have about 3,990 square feet on three floors, not including the attic.

MAIDEN: And the houses that you are speaking of selling for \$550-\$750,000?

MCGREGOR: ... are rowhouses.

MAIDEN: And how many square feet?

MCGREGOR: I would say probably on 3 stories with an attached garage, 2500 maybe 3,000.

MAIDEN: Let's go back, instead of coming up to the present. Let's slip back. Were there some really powerful issues related to the zoning? Were there some real battles or was it just something that needed to happen?

MCGREGOR: Well, when the right to vote and the right to have a city government as a city government, not a state government, there were lots of peculiar things that had to be straightened out. There were many meetings about it, but I don't recall anything that could be called a donnybrook. You know, when the CHRS said "let's not build highrises" and "let's do some kind of constraint on the Capitol Architect"—those kind of things, there was give-and-take and they came to agreements which are still holding. Except, I noticed on a post today, when I was down at Pennsylvania and 4th SE, that there's an action by the CHRS and the commercial people to do some rezoning. I don't recall what they were, but I think it's to create... they're increasing the amount of square feet that certain zones have to have before they can move into them. The notice listed a number of properties, but I haven't looked up the ones that are involved.

MAIDEN: Let me ask you, what was the interaction between the neighbors? You mentioned some of the things you and your wife Lois were involved in, but as far as social interaction during a week or two, what are some of the things you might have done? Let's go back to, say, when you first came here.

MCGREGOR: I think the closest personal relationship we had in the beginning was with the people next door on the west side of the house. He is now dead. His wife Mrs. McCuller is a valuable neighbor.

In any case, they invited us over or we exchanged Christmas and New Year's dinners in December of 1968, and he was one of the construction bosses for the General Services Administration. He and his wife were probably the first people that we knew on the Hill who had come up here specifically to buy and redo homes and rent them. I think they came up here about the time that the Joneses did. John Jones was an executive to one of the Senators from the western States. They thought this real estate business was going to make a lot of money for them. They said, "let's do it." So, they were contemporaries maybe 10 or 15 years before Lois and I came up to the Hill. Mrs. McCuller has a beauty shop downstairs—everybody around wants to have her sign come down—I say leave it alone.

MAIDEN: This is the house beside yours.

MCGREGOR: #719. Then of course, John and Inez Jones and Lois and I and Jane became very friendly. One of the interesting things about our relationship was that after we got to know each other, we found out that their son, who was a photographer, was hired by the National Geographic to go to the Antarctic at the same time that I was in the US Navy Antarctic program.

MAIDEN: And that's the Jones' son?

MCGREGOR: Yes, he was living in New York. We became very good and close friends. That spring we were invited to go down to their place in Rehoboth and spent time down there. When they weren't there, they would come over and say "well, we're going to be gone for a couple of weeks up in NY or down in the southern part of Delmarva peninsula. Would you like to be at our place in Rehoboth?" We would accept. I would drive back and forth on the weekends, spend time back here keeping the house up. The summers were pretty much at Rehoboth.

Our closest friends were people who lived in the NW who were associated with the consular officers club retired and who I was associated with during my tour in Antarctica and negotiations for the Antarctic treaty. We met every Thursday for cocktails and dinner and bridge until 11:00 p.m. There were 28 of us, sometimes only 24 of us. That was sort of the core around which we operated. However, we did participate in the local Democratic bull roasts that were held down in... I think the Episcopalian church in SE. They had a big, unimproved lot in the back where the Kiwanians would put on a large bull roast every year and convince everybody they should vote Democratic. Both Inez and John Jones were great and wonderful Democrats. We would tag along with them when they went to big national committee doings at the big hotels downtown when they would have big speakers from all over the country talking to them about how great the Democratic Party was. It was a lot of fun at that time because they were great.

We were very close to the Presbyterian Church. Jane in particular became very involved in the church. As such, we had pot lucks for people in the congregation at our house and also at various homes in VA, in MD, and in DC and on Capitol Hill. We volunteered once a month to prepare meals for the homeless and less fortunate. These meals were served by the Methodist Church on Seward Square and the Church of the Brethren on Seward Square. On the second Sunday of every month, we provided brown bag lunches. After services, we would go over to Seward Park and feed, at the most, 50 people. Both of these programs continue.

MAIDEN: How long ago did it start, do you remember?

MCGREGOR: Ever since Lois and Jane went into the church; maybe 23 years.

MAIDEN: So, ok. It goes back a long time. I am wondering if you might want to continue another time. OK, well let's turn it off.

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

February 26, 2002

MAIDEN: OK, got it. [laughter] When all else fails, read the directions. This is February the 26th. I am interviewing Ron McGregor, picking up where we left off from our last interview. So, Ron, do you want to begin?

MCGREGOR: I think we were discussing the community interest in what was happening to the hospital after it was taken over by MedLink and MedLink took everything out of the hospital.

They took every thing out of the hospital and sold it to a private contractor. Consequently, the new owner had pretty severe restrictions on taking over. He quickly started to have financial difficulties, so he was trying to get things moved into the hospital from the city health system. The thing he was interested in was the outpatient mental health program. The local community was not very happy with this because there were three or four such institutional services provided in the local area within five or six blocks of the hospital. So, we made representation to various agencies in the public health service of the city. It was found that there were other more appropriate places, closer to neighborhoods who had the highest percentage of people that would be using it. They would not have to ride buses or trolleys or taxicabs to come in for their clinical appraisal. So, that was shot down by the city after they had knowledge of what was going on and what was available. The city moved in favor of the community.

The ownership of the hospital became sort of a focus of attention in the local area around the hospital because they found that things that were promised were not being taken care of. The owner was still having financial difficulties. We were fearful that there would be something done without the community's knowledge. And after it had been accomplished, as a deal, we would not be able to recoup. So, people in the community took it upon themselves to keep sort of a kind of a watch on what was transpiring and following what was happening in the local districts.

But in the meantime, the character of the community was changing very rapidly. It was becoming more focused on the new law students who were coming into the area and living here. New construction was bringing in over various parts of the Hill a lot of young students and graduate students and upwardly mobile young people. A good many of them stayed in the neighborhoods. Some of them bought small places and worked on them and sold them and moved up to bigger places. So, there was this small change in the population all the time. The people who didn't have enough money to live in the neighborhood were being pushed out. The whole community became more affluent.

But along with it, there was no reduction in the crime rate, which I found unusual. Our white hat gang—the night block patrols—used to meet with officers who were assigned to this part of Capitol Hill. When we started meeting with them and expressed our concerns, they did their best to try and patrol this part of the Hill more than they did before, using bicycles, scooters and foot patrols. However, there just were not enough of them to keep a constant watch. The patrols would fall off, then we would complain and they would go up and then, finally, the chief of police had a meeting with us. He told us, “Look, I don’t have enough people to do it. We hope that somebody will come along and authorize more people and put the money up for additional people.” This eventually happened, but I guess there is a crime rate which never disappears because people are living together, and they are living closer together than they had before.

One of the things that happened was that there were more people buying houses and having architects and engineering firms either remodel the interiors or reconstruct them to their historic time. This continues to go on. The field is broadening up now to outside the historic district. The movement of this affluent group moving in is continuing to move people who are on relief or in welfare farther out from the boundaries of the Capitol Hill historic district.

Our little organization, the Stanton Square group, which was a dynamic membership group, was concerned with many things with the Stanton Park and the houses around it. They had a number of lawyers who were very active in the community politics who did *pro bono* work for the organization. Then it came to our attention that the owner of the hospital had sold part of the hospital ground or intended to sell part of the hospital grounds to a developer. We found that many of the people on the Council thought it would be a good thing to do something about the hospital, the main part of the hospital, that was not being used any more. The new part of the hospital that fronted on the 7th Street side between Constitution and C Street NE had been converted into a continuing care and a therapy care installation. The other parts of the buildings were not being used. So, the Council in its wisdom elected to approve the sale and that’s when our local group got involved and we had a series of meetings. We did a lot of homework as to zoning and traffic analysis and the state of building, the state of the parking garage over there, the state of the plumbing—would it have to be replumbed? But we found that all of the infrastructure was ok, but the underground garage structure had been condemned and had not been used for a number of years. We started to have a series of conferences with the builder and his lawyers and his architect. This went on for almost a year. The first thing that happened was that the city and our small group and CHRS and the Episcopal Church next to the hospital and the Stanton Park Community Group began putting the pressure on keeping the place as close its 1900 to 1913 to 1920 character as they could. So the portion of the hospital grounds that was on the west side of 7th Street between Massachusetts Avenue and C street, where the old apartment building was or is, the builder agreed to renovate that

building. Then he was authorized to construct, meeting the standards of the Hill's requirements for building.

In the late fall of 2001, he started construction over there. At the time, the main hospital was still being debated. The crux of the matter was that it was just a large place to be put into a small neighborhood that had infrastructure troubles anyway. One-way streets and exits and entrances during rush hours with that number of people being put into a new apartment building would cause serious traffic jams that were already bad. So, the developer agreed to not demolishing the building and not raising the profile beyond the heights that were designed into the building and constructed in 1928. From then on it just became a matter of odds and ends of things that had to be cleaned up. The principal trust then became that their construction would not in any way damage the setting of the Episcopal Church. There were a lot of discussions and give-and-take. I guess to my knowledge that in mid-2001 or in the fall of 2001, the authority to go ahead with the construction of the hospital itself would be ok.

Now, we did not participate in how the current patient load would be redistributed to other places. That was not in our field. That was something that the owner of the hospital had to do. But between the approval of building the townhouses on the west side of 7th street and along C Street NE, there were some changes made in the structures that were going to be put in the townhouses. As we went along, these things got resolved without too much acrimony. The contractor or the builder has not yet started on the old hospital building that was built in 1928. But he is proceeding now with the place on 7th street. The interesting thing is that they told us at that time, that the prices would be around \$450,000 for the townhouses. However, in last Sunday's paper, the 25th, the townhouses are being advertised at \$750,000. The building, the oldest apartment building on Capitol Hill, is being advertised for \$900,000. I don't know whether that's per floor or per building, but anyway, those were things that have gotten lost since the market boom.

In the meantime, I started out by saying that the character of the block, this square block that my home is located in has changed character. I noticed that a recently renovated building two doors from my house is now taken up by a non-govt., non-profit organization. It looks like the migration has started for a lot of things, too—organizations and people, to make their homes on Capitol Hill, because of the traffic jams they get into on a daily basis. Living up here you can walk to work if you work for the Capitol. So, it and the Law Center being right down at the bottom of the Hill makes it a convenient place for people who are associated with the Federal Government. At the same time, farther afield, down at 8th Street at the Navy Yard, the southeast Federal Center is being built. M Street is turning into another high rise business offices buildings, filled up with consultants.

MAIDEN: Can I interrupt you a little here?

MCGREGOR: Sure.

MAIDEN: I guess I was thinking it would be more useful if we go back. You may have some comments about what you were talking about you want to finish. But I know the other time, we were talking about the real events that happened and some tragedies. Some real historical events that happened since you've been here in the Hill. I was thinking if you want to finish where you were and then maybe...

MCGREGOR: Um-hum. Don't remember where I was.

MAIDEN: Well actually you were on the Federal Center, was it the Federal Center SE. You were on M Street talking about construction there, at this time.

MCGREGOR: Just now?

MAIDEN: Yes.

MCGREGOR: Boy, 33 years of events. Whew!

MAIDEN: That's a lot, but did you say that Dr. King was assassinated soon after you moved here?

MCGREGOR: Yes.

MAIDEN: How did the Hill react? What do you recall?

MCGREGOR: Well, that happened before we bought our house. When Dr. King was murdered, we were living in NW. I was working at 17th and Constitution in the old US Navy temporary buildings. On the day he was killed, there were riots along the H street corridor and along Georgia Avenue and other streets. But those two I recall because when we heard about it we went up to the roof of the Navy Building at that time at 17th and Constitution and watched. You could see the plumes of smoke going up where fires occurred. They called out the National Guard. It seems the plumes of smoke were where cars were overturned and set on fires and things like that. That night, there was much damage done to Georgia Avenue and H Street in particular. It was breaking of windows, looting of stores. The usual mob violence to their own source of commerce. I guess there was a good—it was confined essentially to the people who lived in the neighborhood turning their anguish. The constant drumbeat of “we're not being treated fairly” and so on, at that time, was principally African-American. The Hispanic population had not yet become a force that it is now.

So, there were some local confrontations with the National Guard. They were resolved without any deaths that I recall. But, it was a convulsion to the government of the District of Columbia at that time.

MAIDEN: Let me ask you when this first started, how did you personally feel when you going to work and from work? Did you feel...

MCGREGOR: I wasn't living on Hill at the time.

MAIDEN: I know you weren't here.

MCGREGOR: No. It didn't bother me. I lived at 4817 Reservoir Road. I got the bus every morning at about 7:00 and it was so remote that my recollections were of these smoke things in the distance.

MAIDEN: Oh, ok.

MCGREGOR: So it really didn't spill over to where I worked or the area in which I worked or into the part of the city I lived in.

MAIDEN: What about your relationships, though, with black people with whom you worked or were friends. I'm sure it had to have some effect.

MCGREGOR: No. Other than the sorrow for and concern for the black people who were just starting their own businesses in these corridors and now were bankrupt. That kind of thing. They were just starting to have their own stores. You can still see the effect of it on the H Street [NE] corridor. That was one of the first things the City did was start putting up office buildings, workplaces. CVS built a big drug store mall up there at 8th and H. There are a couple of city office buildings on H street around 5th and 6th. There is continual improvement up there. The neighborhood is changing. There are a great many more Anglo-Saxon homeowners. People buying up places, renovating them, then reselling them. In 1992-93, when that started to go from East Capitol Street beyond Massachusetts and Constitution toward H street. I think maybe the real estate ownership in that area, between North Capitol and H Street and down to H Street, that block, is probably maybe changed 50% since that time. Rather than being rentals, a lot of them are now owners. I make that judgment only from the fact that the character of the people who are in the congregation at my church. Now, in 2002, H St Corridor is being revisited by city planners and doers for a complete revitalization to be completed by 2006.

MAIDEN: And your church is Capitol Hill Presbyterian.

MCGREGOR: Yes. So, I guess at the same time all this was going on, with MLK, the Redskins were playing down in RFK Stadium. Lois and I had season tickets for the three of us, Jane too. It was the biggest party you ever went to. Every weekend during a football season. It was a place of real joy, except when we got beat, that was sadness. For the first couple of years that we were here, up until about 1984, Lois and Jane and I used to walk down and walk back. Then Lois said, "that is too much walking for me." I would drive down and drop Lois and Jane off and then go back up in front of Eastern High School, park

the car and then walk back. And I got to see and talk to a lot of people in that part of the city, which has now changed character. One of the things that Jack Kent Cooke kept getting on the mayor about was “Why don’t you do something about the RFK stadium? That’s an eyesore.” So, now it’s no longer an eyesore. Green grass, nice building, all taken care of. I’m talking about a migration and it may not be a migration going from here to there. It might be that it is something internal because the whole place is better than when we first moved in. Salubrious is not a good word to describe. There is an inner feeling and an inner interest in the place that was sort of principally transient when we first came up here.

MAIDEN: Um, hmm. There’s a real camaraderie.

MCGREGOR: Sure, everybody, regardless. If you commit yourself to living on the Hill, you are a different breed of cat. I think that’s what happens.

MAIDEN: Let me ask you this. Are there any negatives about living on the Hill? What do you not like about living on the Hill?

MCGREGOR: Well, I don’t like the fact that this really good hospital that the Congress spent a lot of money disappeared. The faculty at the hospital, the cadre of physicians and technicians and nurses, disappeared. That I didn’t like. I still don’t like. I think that I feel like I am in my home town of Rainy River. When anything went wrong there and required hospital care, specialist care, or evaluation, one had to travel 125 miles to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to receive appropriate care.

MAIDEN: Here, you could go across the street.

MCGREGOR: And I did.

MAIDEN: I guess what I meant with that question is “What might you have if you lived out in the suburbs that you don’t have here?” Something that you might like.

MCGREGOR: There is nothing in the suburbs for me.

MAIDEN: Ok. I thought you would say that.

MCGREGOR: I like to walk down the street and say hello to people, stop and talk at the corner—stuff like that. The suburbs, you are so busy going back and forth to the urban center that you don’t have time to do that, except on Saturday and Sunday. And then you go to the malls.

MAIDEN: What about, you haven’t said anything about politics. Do you want to go there? How things might have changed politically in the time that you have lived here. Or just your observations.

MCGREGOR: A general observation. And that, maybe because I am reading about the Enlightenment and some of the forecasts that were made. Our Federal government is now locked in confrontation because of party politics.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

MCGREGOR: We were talking about what I feel about politics. When I came up on the Hill first, I used to devote whatever time I had away from my work to attend subcommittee and committee hearings on the Hill, particularly when they were talking about the research programs that were being funded by the agencies and by the NSF. In 1968 and 1969 and 1970 there was a certain amount of a camaraderie between the parties. The movement of legislation went along sort of smoothly, within the framework of all the logrolling and all the politics that went on. There was a change in the mid-1970s, when they spent more time denigrating people, the politician-to-politician denigration. When the hearings were going on, there was an effort, I felt, to castigate people who were witnesses called by a member of Congress to testify before a committee and then, members of the committee would try to elicit destructive things to the persons. When I had a chance to read the Congressional Record of those committee hearings, none of that stuff showed up in the record. I tried to find out what happened. Before those records can be published, each one of the speakers has a chance to edit.

So, then I started to realize that this was really a political power struggle between Democrats and Republicans. Both of the parties are not free of blame. It has just gotten worse and worse, so that I have lost interest in following. If I wanted to find out what was going on, I would try and get the bills and try to read them. But they got so verbose that you know you can't follow a bill now because there have been so many amendments made and so on. So, I guess my real thing is that my first associations in the 1960's and 1970's were kind of "yeah, there is something going on out there that I like." But in the mid-1970s, it got off track. It became highly personal—and not praise-each-other-kind of personal—but little digs here and there. You know Social Security is an argument every year, but nothing changes it. Education is the same.

MAIDEN: And it started that long ago?

MCGREGOR: Yeah, sure. It just seems to me that there's a great deal of money being spent on all kinds of other things. It seems to me that the Senator from Wyoming is interested in getting money for Wyoming, and he really doesn't care what happens to the people from New York's money. The distribution of the taxes seems to be based on seniority and how cruel you can be to the other members of the House and Senate. That's a terrible thing to say, but I think when they move into the House and

Senate at the Federal level, they sometimes forget that it's not their money and it's not their State's money. It's the Federal money, given by citizens who pay their taxes. And there are lots of them that don't live in Virginia or New York State, but these States get the money because their Senators are powerful. They have been there a long time and they know what to do.

MAIDEN: What is possibly a major political event that you would recall from, say, the 1960s or 1970s?

MCGREGOR: I think the ongoing political event that keeps grinding past us all the time is our relationship in the Middle East with Israel and how dominant it is and how much we have had to pay, not in coin of the realm, but in our personal feelings for the fact that that has continued now, year in and year out, since 1948. It's still not been resolved. I think that our political arena should be able to do something about that. I think that the coalitions that were attempted to satisfy the drug war, for example, were good. I think the coalitions that were involved in returning Kuwait to its own government in the Iraq fracas. The arrival of really the opening of China during the 1960's and 1970's and 1980's was a very important thing. You can't isolate that many millions of people, hundreds of millions of people, from the world economy, and not suffer. I thought opening that up was great.

Hi. How are you? (To Jane who has come home from work.)

And I think one of the other political things—it is ongoing and will go on forever—is the fact that the environmentalists have called the attention of all the population of the country and made us more political aware of damaging the environment in which we live. And if we don't do something about it, things will not look so good. I think the response of the politicians, by and large, has been pretty good. However, when we go back to my other statement about the Senators being worried about their own back yard, and not opposing the tearing down of the big forests for paper mills and so on, and log roads and all that kind of stuff. And protecting a single species that no one's heard of before. Those kind of things have to be smoothed over. I think those things are happening more often now than before. I think that the environmental people are strong enough and the national population is concerned enough that they support these positions all over the United States.

MAIDEN: Are you ready to stop?

MCGREGOR: Sure, whatever.

MAIDEN: Well, I think it's been a good one. Thank you a lot, Ron.

MCGREGOR: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW