



## BETSEY BAYLESS

1944 -

Honored as 2019 Historymaker  
Arizona Secretary of State  
Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors



The following is an oral history interview with Betsey Bayless (**BB**) conducted by Diane Smith (**DS**) for Historical League, and video-graphed by John Blake on September 17, 2018 at the Arizona Heritage Center in Tempe, Arizona.

*Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park, Tempe, Arizona.*

- DS** We're interviewing Betsey Bayless today, September 17, 2018. She is one of six 2019 Arizona Historymakers honored for their contributions to the State of Arizona over their lifetime. She's a third-generation Arizonan and has made a career in public service. She was the first woman to head a major agency in state government, served on the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, two terms as the board's chairman, was Arizona Secretary of State, was one of the Fab Five, the only time in the United States that all major state elected officeholders were women, and ran the new Maricopa County voter mandated public health district from its inception in 2005 until she retired in 2013. So, let's start at the beginning. Tell me about your family.
- BB** When I look at my life, I see a mosaic. And it's made up with thousands of little pieces and hundreds of those pieces involve my family. So, bear with me as I talk about my family. I'll go back to my great-grandparents, D.T. and Louella Bayless. They were granted a homestead by the federal government and it was out way, way, way out of town. I mean, all the activity in Phoenix was around Washington and Central. It was out at what is now Glendale Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and they had 20 acres. They had a white frame house and that white frame house is still there and it looks so nice. But on the 20 acres, they planted crops and Louella, my great-grandmother, she farmed those 20 acres and she harvested the crops and she provided really all the food for her family and all the food for her extended family and other families. And, she had five boys, so that was a lot of food that had to be provided. So, one of these five boys, was [my grandfather] Lee Bayless [Robert Lee Bayless Sr.]. He was into agriculture as well, but he was into citrus. He planted a great many of the North Central groves and he also had groves in South Phoenix. His family, he, my grandmother Peggy Bayless, and their three kids--my dad was one

\*Arizona Historymakers is a Registered Trademark of the Historical League, Inc.

of those--they lived on the side of the Arizona Canal up in Sunnyslope. My dad described it--he said it wasn't a house, it was more a shelter, with no amenities. No running water, no electricity or anything, but they lived right on the side of the canal, I guess, so that my grandfather could be near his work because they were right in the middle of the grove. And every day, my dad rode his horse down Central, down the bridle path to Osborn School, which was at Central and Osborn, which was still way out of town, but he loved that and his whole life, he talked about that. My grandfather was also the elected game warden for Arizona. And he did it by the book. So, when he caught Zane Gray up on the Rim hunting out of season, he threw him out of Arizona. Now, you hear a lot about Zane Gray, and there's all this romantic talk about him and his cabin on the Rim, and I just sort of keep my mouth shut when people are talking about that.

My dad, Bob Bayless [Robert Lee Bayless Jr.] much to my grandmother's surprise, graduated from high school. He went to J.C., which is now Phoenix College and he graduated. And then he went to the University of Arizona and he graduated, and everybody was shocked by these developments. He came out of college and he went to work in a plumbing and heating company. And, it wasn't long before he decided he knew a whole lot more than the people who were running that company, so he thought that he would create his own company. By this time, he had met my mother [Pauline Hickcox]. They had gotten married and she was in total support of him creating his own company. So, at some point, he goes back to the East Coast and he talks to the Carrier Corporation and he decides that he would bring air conditioning to Arizona. Now there were a lot of companies in Arizona that had evaporative coolers and air coolers and things like that, but there was no air conditioning yet. He brought air conditioning to Arizona. And mostly he did commercial air conditioning because it was expensive to install and so companies pretty much did it. It then progressed to residential air conditioning. But we had the first air-conditioned house in Arizona and we loved it. We thought that was pretty nice. We also had the first TV set in Arizona, so, people would sit at our house and be cool and watch TV. My mother--she graduated from the University of Arizona at a time when women didn't really go to college. And then she taught at Scottsdale High School. In fact, she sponsored the first dance at Scottsdale High School, and she was always very proud of that. Okay, so that's the citrus part of my family.

The copper part of my family, Betsey Hall, my grandmother, she was born in Colorado and she went to nursing school. And then she moved to Dawson, New Mexico to take a job as an obstetrical nurse in a little tiny hospital in this mining camp. Now mining camps could be pretty rough, but she went all by herself and worked in this mining camp. She met the accountant for the company, Chas Hickcox, and she married him and then when Chas' boss got the opportunity to come to Arizona to open the brand-new Inspiration Consolidated Copper Company, he jumped at it and so they came to Arizona and he worked at the Warrior Cooperative Mercantile in Inspiration. Inspiration is between Miami and Globe--never say Miami in Arizona, it's "Miama," and Inspiration's located on a couple of hills and you have an upper circle and a lower circle. This is the town and that's where the people lived that worked there. We used to fight to see who was going to get to go to Inspiration. My siblings, my cousins and I, we all wanted to be in Inspiration to be with my grandparents and we all considered my grandmother to be our very

best friend and I think Inspiration was kind of like Oz. It was just this magical place that we loved to go and have fun and it was also a great place to grow up.

**DS** It sounds like your family has been a big influence in many ways on your life and your career. Could you elaborate on the ways that has echoed down in your personal choices?

**BB** Well, I would have to say that my family, my father's family has been embedded in Arizona for generations and then my mother's family only came with my grandparents, but all of them, everybody in the family was so enamored with Arizona and so loved Arizona and wanted to make it better and wanted to participate and—and, that was a big impact on me. My grandmother in Inspiration, that I spent so much time with, she was a model for me of feminine strength and independence and character and I just admired her so much and she gave me a lot of self worth. My mother was exactly like her. And so, they expected me to be an outstanding person and an outstanding member of the community and without even thinking about it, I was because that's the role model that I had seen. And my dad, although he was a very poor student, he put a big emphasis on academics with me and so I always wanted to get all A's because I never wanted to disappoint my dad. But they were really pillars of early Phoenix.

I remember one thing that happened, there was a big alarm that sounded in the early 1960s when people kept building houses higher and higher on the mountains and so somebody said, hey, let's create a Phoenix Mountain Preserve and they contacted Barry Goldwater. And Barry Goldwater said, "All right." He was our U.S. senator then. "Okay, I'll give this a try." He contacted my dad and a bunch of other people. My dad owned some lots way high on Camelback Mountain and I wanted them to build a house up there 'cause I wanted to live up there, but Barry Goldwater called and said, "You need to give those lots to the Phoenix Mountain Preserve. Not sell them, give them to the Phoenix Mountain Preserve." And my parents did that because they knew that it was the right thing to do. Now, that's a big lesson for someone. I wasn't even an adult yet, but I was kind of verging on it and I was a teenager and, I saw that, and I thought, that's the right thing to do.

**DS** You have given your family history from so far back, and the things that your parents and your grandparents did, you were in a perfect position to have watched Arizona grow and evolve over the years. How have you seen Arizona change and evolve? Obviously, your parents have been instrumental in that.

**BB** Well, I always say I was born in a small town, but now I live in a big city. And I have not moved. And that is the essence of living in Phoenix and in fact, in living in all of Arizona. When I was young, we lived just inside the city limits. City limits were at Thomas Road and we lived just inside the city limits. But then as the city started to grow, a lot of servicemen who had been stationed at Luke Field, which is now Luke Air Force Base, they came back to Phoenix because they just thought it was such a delightful place when they were in training, so they came back and that helped to grow all of these different parts. And before you knew it, the city limits

moved to Indian School, and then it moved down to where Central High School is now. And then to Camelback. And then to Bethany, and it's still pushing out, as it is today because the city still grows.

But it was a great place to grow up. We cruised Central when we were teenagers. We tubed in the Salt River. We waterskied in the canal and we did all these things that my parents weren't supposed to know about. They cut a hard-packed dirt road, way up north going east and west and that was eventually Bell Road and we would go up there and drag race and, but there were wide open spaces. There was really just mostly desert forever. Now, when I was in second grade, my family moved up to my grandparents' grove which was way out in the middle of nowhere, but it was actually just north of Glendale Avenue and around 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and I remember all of my friends, their mothers were horrified that my parents would do that to us because they thought it was child abuse, take a kid so far out there. But we had horses, we had a cow. We had ducks and chickens and dogs, and we had a wonderful time. And it was a great place to grow up. There's not so many of those places anymore in Arizona. In order to even have horses you have to go very far out, but we had it all there and we thought we were way out, but we really weren't.

**DS** Besides your parents, who obviously are, and your whole family, who have been a great influence on you, who are a couple of other people who have been great mentors to you or had great influence over who you became?

**BB** Well, let me start by talking about someone who was my boss when I was just getting started in public service. His name was Bob Cleere and he was a young attorney. I thought he was old, but he was under 35 and I was about 26 and we were installing a new merit system in the State of Arizona. And so we were required to go around to all the state agencies and classify the jobs and set compensation for various positions and so forth--and the agency heads didn't like it at all because they wanted to have complete flexibility with whatever they did. But that was the job. One day, Bob called me in, and he said, "Betsey, I need to have you change your demeanor. You have such a hard edge with these agency heads. And they're middle-aged men and you have a hard edge with them and it's making you less successful than you can be." And I was a little puzzled by that. But then he said, "You're acting like the men act and they have this hard edge, and nobody judges them negatively for that. But they do with you." And then he said, "You can be anything you want. You can be highly successful, but you just need to be yourself. You're a friendly person and you need to be yourself." So, I was crushed after that conversation, but I thought about it and I thought I'm gonna give it a try. And I just went out and I was friendly to all these agency heads and pretty soon, everybody was very happy with my performance. And so, it took a lot of courage for Bob Cleere to approach me. He could've just fired me. He could have transferred me. He could've done a lot of things, but he didn't. He said, "You're worth it. And I'm going to tell you how you can be better."

Another mentor that I had was somebody who had no idea that he was mentoring me and that was Bruce Babbitt. He was Attorney General and I was working with him on the same merit

system program and he didn't like it at all because he wanted complete flexibility with his employees. But one day, he was Governor, because the Governor died and so he became the Governor. And he completely changed his attitude then. He said, "I've got to have some control over what all these agencies are doing and what they're paying people." So then, he looked at me and our whole project a lot more kindly. But I watched him. It really wasn't so much a matter of what he said to me, but just in watching him. He came into office as Governor. He immediately contacted Burton Barr who was the main man at the House and Alfredo Gutierrez who was the head of the Senate and they got together and Burton Barr was a Republican and Alfredo and Bruce, they were Democrats, but they got together and said, "What do we need to do for the State of Arizona?" So, the first thing they did was they created AHCCCS, which is the State Medicaid program. Arizona was the only state that did not have a Medicaid program. They created that and then they went on and they adopted the Arizona Ground Water Act. Now, that was way ahead of its time--actually, California just adopted a ground water act here a couple of years ago. The Central Arizona Project was a federal project, but it was incumbent upon the Governor to make sure that right at the end it got done and it got implemented correctly. And he did that. He also had a lot of consumer protection issues that he cared about and so it was so instructive to me to watch somebody in a position like that and all he wanted to do was to do what was right for the people of Arizona.

He also gave me the biggest break that I've ever had. He named me to be the director of the Arizona Department of Administration and also chair his cabinet. A day didn't go by where he didn't say, "Don't forget, you're a Republican, I'm a Democrat." And he always called me conservative to the bone. But he liked that when I was in charge of the state budget, state finance, building prisons, building edifices on the Capitol Mall and so forth. And he wanted a conservative to fulfill those roles, so anyway, I jumped at the chance and this was a highly sought-after job. And several of the men who wanted it said to me, "The only reason you got that job is because you're a woman." And I had the presence of mind to turn around and say, "My whole life I've missed jobs because I'm a woman. Now I'm taking this and it's about time." So, Bruce Babbitt was a great influence on me. He's really influenced the way I operate in public service.

- DS** You, in your young career, came out of a great period of bipartisanship in Arizona. Over the years, politics all over the country and Arizona included, has become much more tribal. How do you feel that developed and do you see any opportunity or hope or change that it might go back to a more bipartisan approach? What are your thoughts on that topic?
- BB** Well, there have been good bipartisan times, but you go back to the founding of this country and there was always a lot of in-fighting and strife in various factions and so forth. But it's incumbent upon people in public life to focus on the goal: what is it we need to do for the people of Arizona or whatever jurisdiction you happen to be in. And that's what I observed with Bruce Babbitt and Burton Barr and Alfredo Gutierrez. They sat down, they didn't say who's a Republican or who's a Democrat; they sat down and said, "What is it we need to accomplish?"

Now, in doing so, they made themselves look good. Now, it seems like you try to make yourself look good by being as mean as possible and hurting other people as much as you possibly can and it's even to the point where the citizens, the voters, they expect that, too. And I would hope, and it's possible, but it's going to take a public servant who knows how to describe to the electorate this is where we want to go, and this is how we're going to get there. Right now, we don't really look at where we want to go, we just talk about how we're going to hurt these other people.

**DS** You've talked about your public service. How did you enter this line of work? How did you come to it? Was it something you always wanted to do? How did you become involved in government and the political life?

**BB** Well, I always wanted to be an international banker. And I studied for that at the University of Arizona. I came out of college and I was able to get a job at the international department of the Valley National Bank. And I thought, oh this is gonna be great. I'm off and running. And I had a wonderful time for a while. I was sending letters and money to Europe and Mexico and all over the world and it was great, but the director of that department told me one time in a very kindly way, "The bank doesn't promote women. So, if you ever want to go beyond the kind of job you have right now, you're going to have to go elsewhere." Well that was startling to me because I thought I was doing such a good job and he did, too, but he said that this is bank policy. I thought, well, I better look around and see what else there is that I can do. I went to the State as an intern in public administration, minimum wage. And I was there for most of one summer and it was a tremendous experience because I felt I was right in the middle of everything. I knew everything that was going on in state government and I was learning so much every day and it was just a fascinating experience.

So, I took a permanent job and I worked in what was to become the Arizona Department of Administration, which means you work with all the different state agencies. I got to know really everything about every agency, and it was fascinating. And at that time, there were no women supervisors, managers, department heads, or anything like that. But it was the '70s pretty quick like. And things started to change in our world. And before you knew it, I was a supervisor. I was a manager. I was a department head. I was able to move into different agencies in state government and I kind of just rode that wave when opportunities were available to women and then I had the chance to become the Director of the Arizona Department of Administration, and that was a tremendous boon to me and really to everyone. A lot of the young women who worked in the Department of Administration were so excited about that because that gave them hope that they may be able to do something as well.

**DS** Well, you were either the first or among the first women in so many of the jobs that you have had over the years. And, yes, in the '70s there was this was a great wave of accepting...

**BB** Yes.

**DS** ...women. But still you must've had a lot of--I don't want to say exactly problems--but it must've been interesting to interact with people who were not used to interacting with a woman in a position of authority. And you spoke about how your first mentor gave you advice to be yourself. Did that always work over the years? Or how did you deal with being the first or one of the first?

**BB** Well in sum, I would say it worked. That didn't work every day. But it tended to work. I was always friendly, non-accusatory, non-judgmental, and I made a point of that. I might've felt like being that way, but I always talked just very plainly to people, like let me understand what your concerns are, and things like that. And that worked very well for me. I know there were times when people really didn't like what I had to say, but at least I said it in a straight, friendly way. I know there were people that didn't like me, didn't like what I stood for, but I was doing my job. And so as long as I could look at my behavior and feel that I was honest and above board, that worked for me.

**DS** What is your proudest accomplishment? Professional and/or personal?

**BB** Well, my proudest accomplishments, it's kind of plural, professionally--the instances when I've gone in and turned around messy governments. When I was just voted in to be chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, and that afternoon the brand-new budget director and the brand-new finance director came to see me and said, "The board's been given incorrect financial information and Maricopa County's out of money, so, um, you know, welcome to the chairmanship." And my heart sank. But I thought, well, this is my job now. I've got to do something about it. I had to change the management team. I created a new management team and we systematically went through 15 years of Maricopa County finances so that we could understand exactly where Maricopa County stood. So, we did that. We ended up changing a lot of things around. We didn't raise taxes, but we did change a number of things around and then we started to crawl out of it. It was one full year of terror. It had to be the hardest year that I have ever spent in trying to turn it around and move that forward. I'm proud of that, as difficult as it was.

I'm also proud of my work at Maricopa Integrated Health System. I went into the health care system at the urging of the new board members. It had just become a district splitting off from Maricopa County, and thank you Maricopa County. They sent it off with no money, no staff, no nothing. And it cost a million and a half dollars a day to run the system and we had no money whatsoever. I said to the board members, "Okay, I will try it, but if I can't pull this thing out fairly soon, it's all yours." So, I created a team again. I don't really know how to do anything, but I do know how to create a team and set goals and move forward. We got started on this effort and the first thing I had to do was hire a staff. I didn't have a CFO. I didn't have a chief medical officer, chief operating officer, I didn't have any of those things that every health care system would have. So, we kind of systematically started going on that, wrote a business plan,

determined where we were heading and, little by little, I hired a CFO who came in and said, “No wonder you’re out of money. You’re not charging for things that your system is delivering.” So, I said, “Okay, well let’s start charging for things.” And then things started, that started building on itself. He would come in every single day and say, “Okay, we’ve got another million today. Another million today.” And so pretty soon we pulled it out, but that was very tough, tough going. But we got it done.

**DS** You are renowned for making things right. In addition to the things you’ve talked about, what are some of the other, perhaps more controversial things that you’ve been involved in that people did not want to do, but you felt were necessary to do and how did you accomplish some of these goals?

**BB** Well, one of the very big things and one of the very, very difficult things was establishing the AIDS clinic. This was in 1990. AIDS was a disease that was new, and it was being spread across the country and it was also being spread in Arizona and there was no cure for this. So, I talked to our doctors and I said, “We have to treat these people.” Well nobody wanted to treat AIDS patients and certainly none of the board [county board of supervisors] members wanted to treat AIDS patients. But I said, “This is our job. This is our mission. If we don’t do it, nobody’s going to do it and that’s the wrong thing to do.” So, Ed Pastor was on the board with me. Carol Carpenter was on the board with me and the three of us decided we’re going to establish an AIDS clinic. And so, we voted on it and the three of us voted for it and the AIDS clinic was formed and Maricopa County Integrated Health Systems started treating people with AIDS. Time went on, the HIV virus was discovered and then little by little, some--not cures--but a way to treat people that had the virus. And we also attracted some very top-notch infectious disease doctors who knew how to work with people who had these kinds of illnesses and so now, the HIV/AIDS clinic is 28 years old and I’m very proud that we were able to do it, but it was a nasty, nasty time because there was a lot of homophobic responses to me, threats, you shouldn’t be treating these people. But I saw that as the job of Maricopa Integrated Health System.

Another thing that involved a lot of threats was the creation of Anthem. Anthem was the area out north on I-17 that was privately owned, and Del Webb wanted to develop a planned community there. The community out in that area, New River and so forth, they just went crazy and they said, you can’t do it. This is prime desert and we like to hunt here. Well, the fact of the matter was, it was already zoned. I don’t know when it was zoned, but it was long before I got there. It was already zoned, and you can’t take that away. That’s a property right. And also, if they are hunting on private property, they are trespassing. And so, we had to move forward and I got a lot of threats. I remember one time there was a bus that was unloaded at the board of supervisors and all these people from the bus came into the auditorium, and they hissed and screamed and so forth, but I just have to keep plodding along because that’s the job. And what I needed to do was I needed to develop a situation, a planned development that met the needs of the new residents and the current residents. So, we made Del Webb build a freeway interchange. We also made him buy water from the Indians and pipe it into Anthem and that was consistent with the Ground



Water Act and I think that cost him a hundred million dollars, but we made them perform and so pretty soon, Anthem was developed and then the next thing I knew, City of Phoenix annexed it and so now it's part of City of Phoenix, way, way out there.

Another really difficult thing was Lake Pleasant Regional Park. The Bureau of Reclamation was building a dam up in that area and by virtue of building that dam, Lake Pleasant was going to grow to three times its size. And so, kind of early on, before me, people said, "Well, we'll put a park there." And then, of course, there's a big falling out between Maricopa County and the Bureau of Reclamation. So, everything was scuttled. By the time I came into my job--and this was in my district, mind you--by the time I came in, there was no hope that anybody was going to have a park there. I remember my appointee to the Maricopa County Parks Board was Ann Lynch. And Ann Lynch said to me, "You ought to do something about this. This is horrible that you have a beautiful area like Lake Pleasant and it's going to be even better and so many people are going to want to use it, but there's going to be no development there. There's going to be no resources." I thought about that, so I called the Bureau of Reclamation and for a whole year, I worked--I spent like one day a week out at their offices and we just banged away at every single thing we possibly needed and we came to an agreement and Maricopa County set up Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Maricopa County built an outdoor recreational center. The Pleasant Valley Marina was developed and so the people of Maricopa County and beyond had a great asset. The following year, I received an award from the Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, a Citizen of the Year award or something like that. But it was tough while it was going on because a lot of people didn't want it and it wasn't so much the people that lived out there. I think they wanted it, but it was government people that didn't want me doing that.

**DS** So much of what you've said and talked about [is] looking at a problem, establishing a team, establishing a goal and working toward a goal, but I'm interested in how you led your teams or how you inspired your teams to come together in these circumstances that certainly weren't fun. I mean you have been assigned your while life to deal with problems that nobody else dealt with, so how did you motivate your teams to solve the problem?

**BB** Well, it was a matter of, first of all, choosing the right people because whenever I would choose anyone, I would say, "This isn't gonna be easy, but when we're finished, it's going to be a gold star on your record." You could say that about anything anyway, but just about anything I was involved in, if you could be successful, it would be looked at as a great coup. I tried to pick the right people. And then I tried to keep them motivated. Now, I'm not sure I can tell you exactly everything I did on that, but I worked with them and one thing I always did is I always participated in the work. I didn't sit in an office and look out the window or anything like that. I always worked side by side with everybody. I always gave people a lot of gratitude and thanks for everything they did. I recognized everything everyone did. But by and large, I had people who wanted to do well and who wanted to succeed, and they saw the goal and they were passionate about reaching the goal. Now, all of these people who have ever worked on a team for me, they are part of my network and to this day, to this week, actually, people will call and say,

“Can you help me connect with this job over here?” Or, “I have something available; can you name somebody?” It’s a big network of people who are passionate about Arizona and want to do well.

**DS** You’ve had many, many wonderful successes in your life and your political public career. You’ve had a few defeats, like your loss in the primary for governor in 2002. How did those defeats impact you and what lessons came from the defeats?

**BB** Well, I decided a long, long time ago, that no matter what happened in my life, and I’ve had a lot of defeats in my life, just like everybody else. Some not as public as the governor’s race, but I’ve had defeats and I’ve just always thought--I always knew I would come out better. No matter what happened, if I just kept the right attitude and I made myself happy, that I would come out better than I was before. First big public defeat I had was when I was fired by Governor Mecham. Bruce Babbitt had left office and Evan Mecham came in and he fired everybody in the whole administration, and I was crushed by that because I loved being the Director of the Department of Administration. But I thought, I’ve got to make the best of this. I’ve got to use this as some kind of stepping-stone. Of course, you know, the ink wasn’t dry on my pink slip before he called up and said, “I need you to help me over here at the Department of Revenue.” So, I went over and ran the Department of Revenue for a while, but you know, he really did want me out of there.

So, I left, and I went into investment banking. But what had happened is in the process--whereas the Department of Administration was kind of hidden in state government--I became well known as one of the people that Evan Mecham fired, so I became kind of an interesting commodity. I went into investment banking. Greatly missed public service, but I think that notoriety is one of the things that helped me become a Maricopa County Supervisor. I ran for governor in 2002 and I lost. I lost in the primary and I know why I lost, because I was further to the left of the individual who won, who was further to my right and I knew that. But I just decided I’m going to make something out of this. I really wasn’t crushed by losing the primary. I think my parents were. That was hard on me because they didn’t want me to be hurt. And I really wasn’t hurt near as much as they were, because I thought I am going to pull myself up and I’m going to make something positive out of this. For a while I went back and ran the Department of Administration and then I went to Maricopa Integrated Health System. I’ve just always been able to see the horizon, I guess I would say. See the horizon and know there were better things to come for me.

**DS** Speaking of the Maricopa health system, one of the last things that you did for the System before you retired was to somehow manage to pass a nearly one-billion-dollar bond issue - in 2014 at a time when voters seemed to reflexively vote no on everything. And this was a lot of money and it was for something that wasn’t probably on most voters’ to-do list. How did you accomplish that?

**BB** Well, one thing that I had been aware of for a long time, as a Maricopa County Supervisor with

responsibility for the health care system, I recognized that the people in Maricopa County really valued the Maricopa Integrated Health System and the public hospital. Then there was the item on the ballot to move the health care system out of Maricopa County and make it a special district. I never thought that would pass, but it did because people were afraid that the Maricopa County Supervisors would shut it down and the people of Maricopa County wanted to keep their public hospital. So, then I'm hired and the first thing I do is I come in and I say, "Okay, we're going to turn this place around and then, we're going to renovate all our clinics and we're going to build a new hospital." I can't tell you the peals of laughter that went out of that hospital. All the doctors thought I was crazy, and people would just laugh about that. But I kept saying it and I said, it's going to take us a while, and I started in 2005 and I said it's going to take us a while. We've got to get our finances together. We've got to get our reputation intact and then we'll move forward.

So, it was in January of 2013 that I established a bond citizen committee to look at the condition of Maricopa Integrated Health System and to recommend to the board what we should do. So, they went to work. Now this was right at the time I stepped down toward the end of that year, but I was nurturing this bond committee forward and then my successor came in and I worked with him and I worked day and night on this bond campaign and we made sure that our board adopted what the bond committee wanted and then we went to the ballot. We ran a good campaign and I will tell you, the people of Maricopa County, they wanted the public hospital, they wanted us to continue serving the underserved, they wanted the burn center. It's like the finest burn center in the country and they wanted the behavioral health system which is the biggest in Arizona--and there's not very much in Arizona, but we certainly have the biggest one--and the people valued that and so we moved forward and it passed. And I'm very proud of that.

**DS** It's an amazing accomplishment, especially in these days.

**BB** Yes. Well, but it's what the people wanted, and I instinctively knew that despite everybody laughing at me.

**DS** You've done quite a bit of mentoring of young people along the way; what lessons do you try to impart to them or try to have them learn?

**BB** Well, I guess I have done a lot of mentoring. I don't always identify the fact that I'm mentoring, but along the way I always talk to people whether they ask me or not. I talk to them about their attitude and doing excellent work and I talk to them. This sounds corny, but I talk to them about acting and dressing professionally. You know, people don't talk about that so much anymore, but you need to dress like the job you want, not the job you have. And we used to talk about that a lot in the '70s, the dress for success and people don't do that anymore. But I think it is a big mistake not to do that. And again, I think people need to talk straight with other people, to be friendly to other people, to maintain a nice demeanor and that doesn't always happen in the workplace today, but that's what I tried to impart to people. Like I said, I don't always know that

I'm mentoring, but I'm hoping somebody's paying attention.

**DS** What would you say to the next generation of Arizona's leaders?

**BB** I would say to the next generation to have the courage to involve yourself in the community. Identify what needs to be done and leverage your assets to make the changes that are necessary in the community. Don't just live in this community but be part of it and embrace it and move it along. I think I would say to them, as you're moving the community along and preserving the culture, make sure that Arizona always is a friendly, open place for people to come. A lot of people come here, and they remark on the fact that, well where I came from, you had to live there for two generations before you could ever be involved in anything. And that's not the way it is here, and I hope we will stay that way. And I hope we will also continue to incorporate our native cultures, Mexican, Native American, we need to bring these people in with us and just have everybody pulling together to not only make Arizona better economically, but also to move it along culturally and have it a vibrant wonderful place to live.

**DS** Following up on that question, what do you want your legacy to be when people look back?

**BB** Well, as I said when I looked at my mosaic, I see two things: I see love of Arizona and I see commitment to public service. I want people to be able to see how important it is to be in public service. I was in public service for 43 years. And I want people to look at that and see how valued that is. Also, my love of Arizona in a lot of different ways, my involvement in the community, in politics, in all the various issues, women's issues, education issues, animal issues, health care issues, I want people to look at that and say, this is one person who cared about making Arizona better.

**DS** Turning to a slightly different subject, Arizona has a long tradition of women being active, much more so than eastern states and even many of the western states. We've had four women governors, more than anybody else. Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman Supreme Court Justice comes from here. You were part of the Fab Five, the first and only time in the history of the United States that all the major state office holders were women. Why do you think Arizona seems to be more receptive to women in public life?

**BB** The history of Arizona and in my own family is such that people could not have made it here without the full participation of the women. The early women, the early pioneer women who lived here, you know, they had to grow the crops and take care of the animals and kill the chickens for dinner and had to be a full partner in the family, so women were always accepted as full partners. And as time went on, women continued to demand--I suppose that is the right word--and be given recognition. Women in Arizona got the right to vote long before women in the United States did. I'm very proud that we were able to do that, but the people in Arizona knew that we needed the women and we needed to help them. I think also that it's a product of a good education system. A lot of Arizona women were well educated, sometimes better than the

men. And they weren't afraid to talk about positions or what they believed in, and so they were able to be moved along and I'm really proud of what Arizona has done in that regard. There've been some bad moments, but...

**DS** You've mentioned a few things in passing that you're interested in, they vary widely, but what issues are you particularly focusing on now in your retirement, which doesn't sound like much of a retirement.

**BB** Yeah, well I'm - I'm very involved in health care still. I'm very involved with the Maricopa Integrated Health System. I serve on the foundation and I meet with my successor, the CEO, on a regular basis to try to help him keep things, you know, it's a difficult system. Try to help him keep things together. I'm involved in women's issues. I serve on the board of Fresh Start to try to help women who perhaps haven't had it so easy along the way or hit a snag in their life. I serve on the TGen board, that's health related. They're making tremendous strides in pancreatic cancer and I'm always very heartened by that. I'm on the UofA foundation board. I'm very interested in the medical school and really everything else that the University of Arizona does and so I contribute to them. I'm on the Phoenix Police Reserve Board. I always admire people who serve as policemen or firemen, and so I was asked to be on the Phoenix Police Board, and I jumped at that. I thought that was a great way for me to serve and contribute and these reserve policemen, they work without pay and sometimes as much as 40 hours a week, and it's just astounding to me how much time these people come in. And of course, they all still have their regular jobs. So, there's a lot of things that I'm involved in.

**DS** Do you have any time for any hobbies?

**BB** Well, I like to hike and last year I hiked the Compostela Trail in the Camino in Spain. I'm going to Ireland to hike fairly soon. And I've been on hikes from Cuzco to Machu Picchu and a lot of other things. I'm still very interested in politics and very interested in many community issues.

**DS** You've traveled widely across the world. What are some of your favorite places and why?

**BB** Well, I would have to say that based on my background, I love Latin America and I have traveled all over Latin America. Going to Peru to hike from Cuzco to Machu Picchu and then when I got fired by Governor Mecham, I took off for six weeks all by myself. And I went to Chile and then I went over to Easter Island, came back, went down to Tierra del Fuego, all of this on a bus. I flew there, but I rode a bus and then I took a lake trip over to Argentina, then up to Buenos Aires, and Montevideo. I just love Latin America. I've been there a number of times. One time a group of governors from Argentina--they were from different states in Argentina--they visited the State Capitol, and everybody was tired of meeting with foreign visitors, so I was sent down there to talk to them. I talked to them partly in Spanish and partly in English and so they invited me to come down to Buenos Aires. And I also went to Chaco on that trip and it's just fascinating to me--the Latin culture--and it's always just been a lot of fun to be there.

**DS** That was one of your majors, I think it was...

**BB** It was, yes.

**DS** And how did you come to choose that as a major in college?

**BB** Well, I wanted to go into international banking and Latin American Studies is a program that incorporates economics and history and language, and all different kinds of things and I believed I was getting prepared for international banking. I just didn't realize that women weren't supposed to be in that field.

**DS** Well you were getting prepared for the career you had.

**BB** Yes, and that's true. That's kind of the story of my life. I think that experiences build on another. Even if you have what you think is a negative experience or if you think you've made a mistake in taking a job, these things build on each other and make you more qualified and more appealing. And that's another thing I tell the young people: just remember that you have all these experiences that you're building and don't denigrate any of them. Some of the things that I've done, I thought nobody's gonna ever care about that, and then that has been the highlight of somebody's idea about me.

**DS** I have one more question to ask you. Is there anything that we haven't covered that you feel is an important part of the mosaic of your life, all the many pieces that have made up your career, that you'd like to talk about?

**BB** Well, that mosaic, it really sparkles for me and I'm really very proud of everything that I have done. Obviously, there's some things that didn't turn out quite the way that I anticipated, but I guess the only other thing that I would say-- I gave you a professional accomplishment --I'd like to give you my personal accomplishment. I know this is something that is common to a great many people my age, but I took care of my parents for ten years and I don't mean they lived with me or anything, but I took over their finances and I always had invested all their money and I took over their finances and all their bookkeeping and just made sure that all the decision making was going in the right way. They ended up in independent living and then in assisted living and then one went to the care center and then the other went to the care center. And my dad died at 95 and my mother at 99. And I'm very proud of the fact that I was able to take care of them in their final years. I went every single day to make sure that they ate lunch. If they didn't eat lunch, I'd feed it to them, and then I'd go and make sure they ate dinner and it required a lot of time, but that was very satisfying and I'm very proud of it.

**DS** That's wonderful. Most parents are not so lucky.

**BB** Well, I consider myself very lucky to have the parents I had.

**DS** One final question. And this is almost a reprise of other things that we've talked about, but if you had to identify the themes running through your life, what would those themes be?

**BB** Love of Arizona and commitment to public service. That is what I've been about really my whole life, particularly my adult life. And it's made for a very satisfying life and I'm just very pleased, first of all I'm pleased that I'm an Arizonan because it's a wonderful place to live. And I'm very pleased that I found the outlet to public service that I did, even though I'm sure I would've enjoyed international banking. When I was an investment banker for a few years, I just missed public service so much because I felt like I wasn't contributing anything. I was making money for people, but I didn't feel like I was contributing anything. So that's a big thing for me, that public service.

**DS** Well, you've certainly contributed more to the State than probably you realize. And with that, thank you for sitting down and giving us your experiences and your opinions and your life. Thank you so much, Betsey.

**BB** Well thank you very much.

End of Interview

/gmc