August P. Mardesich

An Oral History

Washington State Oral History Program
Office of the Secretary of State

August P. Mardesich

An Oral History

Interviewed by Sharon Boswell

Washington State Oral History Program
Office of the Secretary of State
Ralph Munro, Secretary of State

First Edition 2000
ISBN 1-889320-12-9

Library of Congress Subject Headings
1. Mardesich, August P., 1920-present
2. Legislators—Washington—biography
3. Washington—politics and government

Washington State Oral History Program
Office of Secretary of State
Legislative Building
PO Box 40243
Olympia, WA 98504-0243
Telephone: (360) 902-4158

CONTENTS

To my wife, family, and all those who have supported me, sustained me, tolerated me, and laughed with me along the way. I am grateful our paths met and we walked together; some briefly, some still. To all, my heartfelt thanks.

FOREWORD

ABOUT AUGUST MARDESICH

Every once in awhile, in the random selection of human beings, a natural is born. A person not full of themselves, yet superbly self-possessed, somehow elevated but with their feet securely on the ground. If one were to mention such a thing to Augie, he would probably give them a flat stare and say something like, "Governor, we all pay taxes."

August Mardesich's law school education was interrupted by Hitler's panzers speeding across Europe. On D-Day minus one, he jumped off the ramp of a LCM into the torrid waters of Normandy. Across war-ravaged France, Augie's tankers delivered gasoline to Patton's Third Army. Augie's native skills were called on when his tankers were far in advance of supply depots. Constant lousy food and worse promises sent the young leader back. He raised hell at command headquarters, got them to sign requisitions, and simply took what he needed from warehouses overflowing with product. Time and again, the second lieutenant improvised and made order out of the chaotic conditions. In less than two short years of field command, he achieved the rank of captain.

In the summer of 1949, while in Alaskan waters, the Mardesich fishing boat sank in a storm. Augie's father and older brother Tony were drowned. Augie was pulled—close to frozen—from the same watery grave. He was appointed to fill his dead brother's unexpired legislative term. Dropped uninitiated and probably without great enthusiasm into the maelstrom of politics, Augie nevertheless applied his talents. While other legislators talked and talked, Augie observed and listened. When they raised their voices, he lowered his. This was a different kind of politician. One who only spoke when he could offer something substantive that had not yet been stated. He set his own schedules and chose the conditions in committee that were strategically in the interests of his constituents. Others were flattered to be in his presence. He was a disciplined master of strategy who could charm without pretense and drive a bargain that one could count on. His colleagues voted him House majority leader.

The Democratic Party made overtures, indicating a desire to have Augie in the Congress of the United States. But the Everett legislator remained with his regional commitments, and in 1964 began his Senate career. Within three years a so-called super committee was formed by the majority caucus and Senator Mardesich was appointed chairman. This new commerce committee combined banking, insurance and state utility regulation. Many of the most important bills passed in the Senate during the late Sixties emerged from the super committee. Augie had become the legislative artisan who could create fluid alliances from both sides of the aisle. Yet he did not lose the respect or discipline of his Democratic caucus. During the decades

of the Sixties and Seventies, he was called the state's most effective legislator. By the mid-Seventies, August Mardesich had become the Senate majority leader. He now was one of only a handful of individuals in the state's history to hold majority leader status in both chambers.

Who is this charismatic and enigmatic man? Augie is best able to plan strategy and tactical maneuvers when alone. There he remembers the dialogue with colleagues, and in the solitude of his own thoughts connects to his strategic needs and those of his constituents. The senator created a large constellation of friends and allies—each a separate bond—and to each he carried his understanding, not sharing everything with anyone. Both confidence and secrecy were preserved in such a tactic. This exclusiveness increased trust—Mardesich never betrayed an agreement by running his mouth; the art of politics, the "deal," was secure.

His father would bring his fishing boat into a cluster of Croatian boats. Tied together after a day's work, these boats would provide a forum in which men would share their day's activities. Augie remembered the stories told, the rough camaraderie, the fierce independence, and the ethnic loyalty. An island of vulnerable fishermen, where a man's word was his soul, a handshake the contract. He also remembered, as a boy, his father dumping the day's catch on Fridays on the pier, so the poor folk in Everett could eat during the Depression. You gave something back, part of the ethic woven into the Mardesich upbringing.

The father from the old country and the grandparents, prizing education and wanting the best for the Mardesich sons, told Augie so many times that he was going to law school that in order to gain some peace, he agreed. Then the war: Augie was a tank commander, helping to lead the Red Ball Express across embattled France to defeat Germany. Entering Cologne, Augie remembered the people so scared they did not emerge from their bombed-out shelters for three days. The young soldier had come of age in a hell of a violent century. He learned how to match the task with his own internal pacing.

The war over, he completed law school. It was probably during this period that August Mardesich started to put together the combination of gifts that would make him the wizard of the legislative process. He developed the capacity to envision a conceptual construct in which facts could be arranged to their best tactical advantage. He became the master of the committee situation. His was a cerebral, intuitive style. Augie could make do with less rather than give himself away in a negotiating conference. He could out-wait them; his preferred reaction was to withdraw a bit, reduce his own need, minimize his dependency. When everybody was in a flap, Augie would say something like, "Boss, the sun will come up tomorrow, regardless."

FOREWORD

Able to disengage from the clatter of feelings in the midst of uproar, he could simply observe. From that position, buffered from the immediate experience of strong emotions, he planned his strategic moves. Although such a profile sounds cold and calculating—adding to the enigmatic mystique—it is something quite different. He was a husband and father, close to his family, engaged in warm interactions at home, caring in his concerns, which embraced not only his family, but working people—the guy out of a job and the down-and-out mom with no visible means of support.

Out of stoicism, maybe born of genetic predisposition, Augie's intention and motivation form a dispassionate presence. A piece of that mystique is an integrity that made it impossible to buy August Mardesich. His enemies would try to prove otherwise in court and fail. Although never stated, I suspect Augie loves the company of his own mind. A way of allowing this to happen in the midst of an over-busy life was to go fishing. There, in the remoteness of a cold ocean, he was once again transformed into the fathoms of his inner self. Unlike most in public life, I don't believe he craved recognition. Yet he was capable of authentic pride when appropriate.

Few people have escaped death as often as Augie. The seas off Alaska have claimed Mardesich vessels. Augie has tramped for four days in the remote forest with daughters Monica and Megan without food, barely escaping the boat before it disappeared below the surface. There are, in the mosaic of the Mardesich life, pieces of fatalism perhaps born of close encounters and chance survivals. In all of these experiences—and only a few are recorded here—Augie presented the enduring characteristic of a man who could manage himself. Thus he was able to manage what often seemed unmanageable, the legislative process. A man who advised five governors, whose genius as a self-taught accountant is legend, who calculated mathematics into complex fiscal equations, and fashioned balanced budgets. He was without equal as a budgeteer of public money. Senator Mardesich was called time and again to the governor's office to untangle, propose, and resolve never-ending budget battles.

Erik Erikson, the Nobel Prize-winning psychologist, said only those who have done what they were supposed to do, when they were supposed to do it, will achieve ego integrity in the last phase of their life. August Mardesich has given the state of Washington such a contribution. For thirty years the citizens of Snohomish County have been represented by an incomparable public servant.

JOHN E. ELY

PREFACE

The Washington State Oral History Program was established in 1991 by the Washington State Legislature to document the formation of public policy in Washington State. It is located in the Office of the Secretary of State and guided by the Oral History Advisory Committee.

Each oral history is a valuable record of an individual's contributions and convictions, their interpretation of events, and their relationships with other participants in the civic life of the state. By reading these oral histories, the complex interweaving of the personal and political processes that shape public policy is revealed.

The Oral History Advisory Committee chooses candidates for oral histories. Extensive research is then conducted about the life and activities of the prospective interviewee, using legislative journals, newspaper accounts, personal papers, and other sources. Then a series of taped interviews is conducted, focusing on the interviewee's public life and contributions, but also including personal sources of their values and beliefs. Political values, ideas about public service, interpretation of events, and reflections about relationships and the political process are explored. When the interviews have been completed, a verbatim transcript is prepared. These transcripts are edited and reviewed by the interviewer and interviewee to ensure readability and accuracy. Finally, the transcript is published and distributed to libraries, archives, and interested individuals. An electronic version of the text is also available on the Secretary of State web site (www.secstate.wa.gov).

Recollection and interpretation of events vary. It is the hope of the Oral History Program that this work will help citizens of the State of Washington better understand their political legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Washington State Oral History Program wishes to thank all of those who contributed to this project.

August and Rosemary Mardesich have exhibited patience and good humor during the long process of creating this oral history document. Despite a busy schedule, losing their home to a devastating fire, and other distractions, they persevered with this project.

Members of our Legislative Advisory Committee have consistently provided guidance, encouragement, and support for this program. We appreciate their advice and unfailing interest in this work. The committee includes Senators Sid Snyder, Shirley Winsley, and Al Bauer; Representatives Patricia Lantz, Karen Keiser, Don Carlson, and Kathy Lambert; Secretary of State Ralph Munro, Secretary of the Senate Tony Cook, the Co-Chief Clerks of the House Tim Martin and Cindy Zehnder. Ex Officio members are Warren Bishop, David Nicandri, Dean Foster, and former legislators Robert Bailey, Alan Thompson, Eugene Prince, and Don Brazier.

The State Department of Printing, including State Printer George Morton, Dick Yarboro, Evonne Anderson, Steve Pfeiffer, Don Reese, Ron Mosman, Kelley Kellerman, Jade Joyce, and the efficient production planning staff have greatly aided us in the production of this book.

Secretary of State Ralph Munro and Deputy Secretary of State Tracy Guerin have been a constant source of support. Their encouragement and dedication have sustained the program. Many others in the Office of the Secretary of State have lent their assistance to the program in innumerable ways. We thank them for their generous assistance.

All those named gave more than we asked. It is a privilege to acknowledge them.

THE WASHINGTON STATE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

INTERVIEWING AUGUST MARDESICH

Part of my preparation for oral history taping sessions includes reading through clipping files about my interviewee's career. Most simply contain information on a pending bill or comments about issues that dominate a particular legislative session. More intriguing are the biographical articles or columns by political reporters that offer personal, although certainly not unbiased, assessments. In the case of August Mardesich, it is hard to nail down any dominant pattern in these commentaries. Few, if any, writers seem to have figured out who the real Augie Mardesich is. In fact, my favorite headline calls him the "Inscrutable Fisherman," a description I think is particularly apt.

August Mardesich is definitely a complex man, and I sincerely enjoyed the opportunity to become better acquainted with him and to unravel some of the personality behind that inscrutable front. At first he seemed a bundle of contradictions. Contrary to his reputation as being somewhat gruff and tough, I found that he loves to tease and joke; and his sense of humor, although caustic, is usually self-deprecating. Generally reluctant to talk about himself, he is, nevertheless, a great storyteller. And despite his off-hand and casual manner, it quickly became obvious throughout our conversations that he was highly competitive and took his work very seriously. He consistently maintains that he is just a simple fisherman at heart, but I believe he also loved the game of politics and worked hard to win. There is much more depth to Augie Mardesich than he will admit. Although I certainly cannot claim to have figured him out entirely, I do know that underneath his inscrutable demeanor is a man of great loyalty, intelligence, dedication, and wit.

Augie Mardesich had a political career born out of tragedy: he took over the legislative seat of his brother who was killed, along with his father and several crew members, when their fishing boat sank in stormy seas off Alaska. He almost died himself, but showed his own mettle by heading back out to fish only a few weeks after the accident. That same type of courage and perseverance also marked his political career. He never hesitated to take a stand on an issue, and if he believed strongly about a piece of legislation, he would usually persist until he figured out some way to get it passed. Although he claims that his brother was the true politician of the family, Augie Mardesich certainly had all the skills necessary to become successful in the legislative arena. He understood leadership and quickly learned when and how to build coalitions or to advocate compromise. His opponents might question his tactics, but they couldn't question his skill in getting things done.

Probably what surprised me the most about Augie Mardesich in our interviews was the pride he took in having read each and every bill carefully. In a session

in which literally hundreds of bills might pass over a senator's desk, this diligence meant many late nights back at the Capitol. He believes that others followed him because they knew he had done his homework. The simple fisherman also had a law degree and knew the importance of preparedness and attention to detail.

Our interviews took place in many different venues—from the Everett Public Library to various restaurants throughout the Everett and Mill Creek areas. I want to express my appreciation to Senator Mardesich for his patience and good humor in waiting for me when I was frequently late to these sessions, as I never seemed to allow enough time to negotiate the traffic coming out of Seattle. I also must thank his wife, Rosemary, for her willingness to let me record some of our last sessions at their home and for being so helpful in locating pictures and clippings for this book. She was always gracious and enthusiastic despite the disruptions I know I must have caused. On one less than memorable visit, I had stopped at a gas station right before I arrived and managed to spill gasoline all over my clothes. I quite literally reeked, and I don't know how both of them withstood the interview because of the smell, which must have lingered in their kitchen for quite some time after I left!

In addition to what I learned about the legislative process from Senator Mardesich, I also came away with a much better understanding of the development of the fishing industry in Washington State. Stories about the fishing and canning business are a fascinating part of this interview, and certainly increased my respect for those who make their living from the sea. There is not enough historical documentation of this important regional industry, which makes it all the more important to probe underneath the surface of an inscrutable fisherman like August Mardesich.

SHARON BOSWELL
Interviewer

BIOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST P. MARDESICH

The shadow of war, coupled with the depressed economic situation in what was at the time Austria, caused young Nicola Mardesich to leave the Isle of Vis off the Dalmation coast, and seek a new life in the United States. He eventually settled in San Pedro, California, where he met and married Mary Felando, also an immigrant from the Dalmation coastal area. Their second son, August, was born February 11, 1920.

In 1928, the family moved to Everett, Washington to be near the salmon fishing grounds of Puget Sound and Alaska's Bering Sea. Augie and his three brothers attended Everett schools and spent the summer months fishing with their father in Alaskan waters.

After graduation from Everett High School, the two older boys, Tony and Augie, attended Seattle University. The bombing of Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war already raging in Europe. The brothers joined the service: Tony to serve in the Navy and Augie in the Army.

When peace finally came, it was time to return to school. The boys enrolled in the University of Washington law school, where they graduated in 1948. Although both passed the bar and were licensed to practice, only Tony sought to make law a career. Augie loved the sea and commercial fishing.

In the summer of '49, shortly after Tony had been elected to the State Legislature, he agreed to fill in for a crew member on the family purse seiner, the *Sunset.* Storms on the Bering Sea can be sudden and fierce. The *Sunset* was caught in such a storm and capsized. Of the nine crew members, which included Augie, his father and brothers Tony, Joe and Nick, five were lost at sea. Among them were Nick Mardesich Sr. and Tony.

After the tragic accident, Augie was appointed to fill his brother's term for the 1950 special session. Thus began twenty-eight years of legislative service in the House and later the state Senate.

He was selected by fellow members to serve as majority leader in both the House and Senate. During his years in the Legislature, he became known for his incisive reading of bills, his ability to simplify frequently confusing language and clarify meaning.

Governor Dixy Lee Ray appointed Augie to the Industrial Insurance Appeals Board on which he served a three-year term.

Although no longer physically involved in commercial fisheries, Augie still maintains an interest in a gillnetter in Alaska operated by his eldest

son, Tony, who carries on the fishing tradition.

Augie and his wife Rosemary now reside in Mill Creek, Washington, where they enjoy visits with their children, Tony, Megan, Monica, Meran, John, and Catherine.

CHAPTER 1

FAMILY AND FISHING

Ms. Boswell: Let's start by talking about your family background. Can you tell me about the Mardesich clan, first of all?

Mr. Mardesich: You mean the horse thieves? Both my parents were from Yugoslavia, born over there. My mother was from a little city on the coast. My father was from an island town about sixty or seventy miles off the coast, called Komiza.

They came over here. My dad came to Tacoma, and my mother and her family ended up in San Pedro, California.

Ms. Boswell: What brought them over here?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know what brought my mother's family over, to tell you the truth. I suppose it was the lure of America. At the time my father came, it was the start of World War I and all that. I don't know why, he just came over. I suppose he thought he was going to get his citizenship by being in the army, except they didn't put him in the army because he couldn't speak English.

Ms. Boswell: Had they been friends before?

Mr. Mardesich: No. My dad was in the fishing business; he fished in Alaska, Washington, and California. My mother's family was in California, in San Pedro. San Pedro is a port area and it had canneries. My dad went down there to do fishing and that's where he ran into that family. Of course, San Pedro was a fairly small town at that time, as was Everett.

Ms. Boswell: Did your dad come directly out to Everett?

Mr. Mardesich: No. To Tacoma first.

Ms. Boswell: Did he know people here? How did he arrive in Tacoma?

Mr. Mardesich: There were Slavs in Tacoma, and that's how he fitted in. He got into the fishing business, and they gave him a job there. And that's where it started.

Ms. Boswell: Fishing, then, hadn't been something that had been in his family before?

Mr. Mardesich: No. They were in the wine business—raising grapes. My dad's family were farmers for the wineries in the old country. I don't know about my mother's family. I was just thinking about this last night. I should try to trace some of that back, myself.

In any event, that's where this family started. For the first part of my life, I lived in San Pedro, California—until I was about six years old. My dad decided he was doing a lot more fishing up here and in Alaska than down there, so he moved the family up to Everett.

Ms. Boswell: Once he met your mother, he based himself in San Pedro rather than up here?

Mr. Mardesich: He was in San Pedro and back and forth. Then, eventually, as I say, after they were married, they decided to come up here because Alaska and the Sound were the biggest part of his fishing season.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about your mom's family. What was their name, and what business were they involved with in San Pedro?

Mr. Mardesich: My mother's maiden name was Felando. They were from the northern part of Yugoslavia and then they came down to Split, a city on the coast in Croatia. I don't know. That's when I started wondering when they came. My

mother's father was a fisherman, also. So, they had fishing in their backgrounds on both sides.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever hear any stories about how they met?

Mr. Mardesich: No, I never did ask those questions. San Pedro was a relatively small community and there were a number of Slavs there. They had meetings of the clans, various Slavs and all that. Then, obviously, they got together.

Ms. Boswell: When they went up to Everett to live, where did they end up first?

Mr. Mardesich: We lived on Twenty-second and Grand Avenue for many years, in a little old house. And then they bought a place out on Eighteenth and Grand, by the park. We were there for many years until a fire started in the back part of the house. We never did figure out how. So, we had to move out of there.

That was after—we were fishing in western Alaska in 1949—and my father, brother and some of the other crew members were lost in a marine accident up there. Somehow, another boat saved me. I suppose it was because I was such an angel, I sort of drifted on the water. Anyway, I was saved, along with three other kids.

The fire happened right after that. My job was to take over the ship from Alaska—fishing boats and processing for freezing salmon and all that. My mother died shortly after that from cancer. I was married when we were still at Eighteenth and Grand Avenue.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about your dad. What was he like?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a good fisherman. How do you describe a person like your father? He was sort of a talker.

I remember when we were kids and we'd be on the boat. At night they'd tie up the boats along side of the others out in the harbor waiting for the next morning to go fishing again. In Puget Sound, this was. Invariably, people would come off of the other boats and sort of congregate on our boat, where the old man would be giving advice and having debates about everything that was going on. That's an image that has stuck with me all the time. My mother was very quiet. Never had too much to say. Mother and Father both worked hard.

Ms. Boswell: What kind of role did she play in the family? Was your dad gone a lot fishing?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, he was gone a lot of the time. My mother ran the place.

Ms. Boswell: Did they continue to spend a lot of time with Slavs, or people with the same background?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. In Everett, here, there was a Slav community that used to get together at various people's homes on holidays. There was Saint Nicholas Day, that was right after Christmas, in the early part of January. That used to always be at our house, and the whole Slav outfit would come over there and have a big party. At other times, it was at other people's homes. They used to do a lot of that—get together. Unlike now. They've drifted apart, and that's a natural tendency, too, with the kids and all.

Ms. Boswell: Were the people in that Slav community in Everett mostly in the fishing industry?

Mr. Mardesich: Mostly fishing. And they eventually built a cannery of their own down here. It used to be just this side of the Weyerhaeuser mill, but it's been taken down. The property was sold and the cannery moved to Anacortes.

Ms. Boswell: What was it called?

Mr. Mardesich: Fisherman's Packing Corporation.

Ms. Boswell: That was an all-Slavic community?

Mr. Mardesich: The Martinis family from Everett, and a few others, were the leading stockholders and instigators in that one. Almost all of them were fishermen.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about the fishing industry. How did your dad start out? Did he begin by working for someone else?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. He worked as a crew member on a boat from Tacoma.

Ms. Boswell: Whom did he work for?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't even remember. I have a picture of him in the first fishing boat he was in. It was a long, rather large rowboat. Four guys on each side pulling the oars. That's the way they fished.

They'd row all the way—that's why they didn't go back to town very often. They rowed all the way, and worked the tide, from Tacoma to the San Juan Islands.

Ms. Boswell: That's incredible. Was he a big man?

Mr. Mardesich: He was not tall. He was about five feet, ten inches and quite stout. Husky. He was quite strong.

Ms. Boswell: What were they fishing for, mostly, then?

Mr. Mardesich: Salmon. Then they got into bottom fish, sole, and all the rest of it later. In California, they used to fish for sardines and tuna. Even when my dad quit fishing down there, he used to charter some of our boats. We had a couple of boats; he'd charter one of them to the sardine fishermen.

Ms. Boswell: Moving up and down the coast like that, was that pretty typical? Was it seasonal, where you went to one fishing ground and then another?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. Alaska was early, Puget Sound was next, California and the sardines was winter.

Ms. Boswell: So, it was almost like a circuit that you would follow?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. You'd go Alaska first, the Sound next and California later. That's the way the seasons worked. And then they started working bottom fish, too. That was later.

Ms. Boswell: When you moved from up San Pedro to the Everett area, was he still following this circuit? Was he still working for others?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. It wasn't too long until he got a small fishing boat, and they switched to power about that time, too. The original boats were quite small and the deck house was very small. One man sometimes could sleep in the deck or pilot house.

Ms. Boswell: When you say small, what are we talking about?

Mr. Mardesich: Forty-five feet.

Ms. Boswell: Were they wooden boats?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, they were all wooden boats built around the Sound.

Ms. Boswell: They were forty-five-foot boats, and then they'd have just one small cabin?

Mr. Mardesich: One little house on the deck, which was the steering house. Some of them had a place where the captain slept, and some of them didn't; it was just steering. The engine room, the living quarters, the mess was all in one area down below, open. They had a little space between the engine and the living area and eating area. It was all one big space.

Ms. Boswell: When you say open, it's open to the air?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, no. It was below deck. From the very front it was filled with bunks, also along the side: bunks and a table and the stove, and beyond that was the engine.

Ms. Boswell: How long a period of time would they be out at any one time? For example, let's just say, they were fishing in the Puget Sound area. Would they go out and come back every day, or

would they be out for a longer period of time?

Mr. Mardesich: They'd stay out a week at a time, because in those days fishing was all week from six o'clock Monday morning to six o'clock Saturday night. So they fished that whole period, when we were in Puget Sound, of course. The boats were faster, when I got involved with it, and we used to run into Everett on the weekends. Even then sometimes, we decided that was a waste of time, and we'd park the boat in Anacortes, which was closer to the fishing ground at the San Juan Islands and at Point Roberts up north. And we'd have a car there and leave it at the cannery. Then we'd drive because it was much faster. That's the way it worked.

Ms. Boswell: What about Alaska?

Mr. Mardesich: Up in Alaska, we used to leave in mid-June to early June, sometimes the later part of May, and be up there through June and the early part of July. Then we would come back here. Fish here in July, August, sometimes into September. Then go south October, November, December. So, it's on the go most of the time.

Ms. Boswell: How would a fisherman like your dad go from working with other people to buying his own boat?

Mr. Mardesich: I guess they saved a couple of bucks. The boat builders were eager to sell boats, and so anyone who had a couple of bucks—and he was single at the time—and being in that kind of a business, you're never around, so you could save it readily. You'd end up at the end of the season sometimes with a fair check, so you walk in and drop it as a down payment on a boat, and the builders would build it for you and carry you. That's the way he got into it.

Ms. Boswell: What was the competition like? Were you competing, with your own boat as a small boat owner, against big companies, or was it primarily local fishermen?

Mr. Mardesich: No, most of the fishermen were in small boats in those days. Canneries owned a lot of them. The fishermen owned a lot of their own. Competition between them was not so much strictly competition, it was a matter of pride. Who was going to catch the most fish? They didn't care—they cared of course, but it really didn't bother them whether it was a big fishing season with a lot of fish, or whether it was a lean season, just so that we got more than anybody else. I had that driven into me. "By golly, you had to be up at the top, or else."

So, if you were missing a few days, you'd stay out there until it was dark and start in before the sun came up.

Ms. Boswell: What were they doing? Was it net fishing?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. Until later, they were primarily purse seiners. Salmon and sardines, that was always purse seiner. Tuna was both: bait boat—that's pole fishing—and later purse seining, but all tuna at first was pole fishing.

Ms. Boswell: But in the Sound and in Alaska it was all purse seining?

Mr. Mardesich: In the Sound it was all purse seining and later it was gill netting in the Bering Sea and other areas, although we were not in that end of it. Purse seining was out to the westward, the Aleutians. Some of the coastal area out there was all purse seiners.

Even when I first went up there, which was in 1937, there were only half a dozen boats in the whole of westward Alaska. That's all. And they were all from Everett or Tacoma.

Ms. Boswell: So everybody knew everybody else?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. As I say, the competition was to get more than your share.

Ms. Boswell: In order to get your share, did you also have to be—I'm trying to phrase this properly—were certain people known for knowing the fishing grounds better, knowing where to go, or how did it work?

Mr. Mardesich: Obviously, that's part of it. With

time, we figured out where the fish would be at a certain point during the tide. When it started to flood, they'd be in one area, and half an hour later they'd be somewhere else. In ten minutes you could get them at a certain spot. And they'd move along the coast and among the islands out there. They'd follow the tide.

Later, with power, we could go from one end of the San Juans all the way up to the north end, just following the tide, and come back the same way, just with the tides. You had to think like a fish.

Ms. Boswell: How do you think like a fish? Tell me how that works.

Mr. Mardesich: That was it. You just had to figure out where they'd been caught and why, you observed the tide. Was it a big tide, average tide, small tide, when it hit a certain area? That, eventually, was all up there.

Ms. Boswell: Do they ever keep a log or anything?

Mr. Mardesich: Never did on our boat, no. Not on a fishing boat. Some may have, I don't know. We never did, I know that. We all ended up on certain tides, certain times, certain places. We've got to move: get going, come on, come on, and all that sort of thing.

Ms. Boswell: It sounds like the work ethic, too, is really strong.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. You can say that again. As I said, part of it was the competition between the various people, as distinguished from sheer competition for how much are we going to make. Dollars were not as much of a factor as how you did compared to everybody else. It made it sort of fun, you know.

Ms. Boswell: Were they also good friends?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, sure, sure. As I say, they'd come in at night and everybody would tie up along side each other.

Once in a while, somebody would what we called "cork," and you would set your net around them. In purse seining, you know where the fish should be, and it doesn't necessarily have to be the beach. You'd set your net in a U and the fish were coming this way on a particular tide; you'd set the net out and some son of a gun would come right in front of you—bang. Some of them, after you get the net half out, they'd start setting theirs. That irked a few people and caused a few comments and a few thrown tomatoes, stuff like that.

Ms. Boswell: So they'd actually do that, cut you right off?

Mr. Mardesich: Heck, yes. Anything to get ahead.

Ms. Boswell: Would you just pick up your net and move and get in front of them?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, yes. If, obviously, no more fish are going to come in, you just close it. It depended on where you figured the tide was best. If there was no tide, you'd go right back in front of him and set in front of him, just to teach him a lesson.

Ms. Boswell: How long a process is that to set the net?

Mr. Mardesich: Setting the net in itself is a very short process, a matter of five minutes, or for that one, three minutes. Nets then were about 250 to 300 fathoms long, and you just rev the boat up and come around. They used to tow the two ends and leave it open so the fish would lead into it. Fish would come in and you could see them sometimes circling in the net, the way they're jumping, the direction they're jumping. They come in and they'd be going this way, with the tide. The fish would hit the net and turn to get out. But the tide would be going the wrong way for the way they knew they were supposed to be going, so they'd turn around and go back. They'd just circle around in there. Sometimes you'd underestimate them and they'd come back out. That's the way it worked. As I say, once in awhile somebody would cork you, plug you up.

Ms. Boswell: Like putting a cork in a bottle?

When you got your fish, if you were out for a certain number of days like that, how did you keep them?

Mr. Mardesich: In Alaska, we used to have to deliver to the cannery every day. Later they had some tenders that would come out and pick the fish up, because they wanted you to stay out on the grounds longer. Down here, the same thing. Many times we used to deliver direct to the cannery, especially up north, because the canneries were not that far from the fishing grounds. We used to come in and deliver every day.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ice them while they were on the boat, or didn't you need to?

Mr. Mardesich: Not for one day, no. They'd can them the next morning.

Ms. Boswell: So you, essentially, had to fish within a reasonable distance?

Mr. Mardesich: A reasonable time, right. A reasonable distance and all that. As I say, they did send tenders out, and if you got a lot of fish and it was near the Sunday law, which we called the period from Saturday evening to Monday morning, we'd come in and deliver to the cannery ourselves, because there would be fewer boats. They'd be clustered around the tenders waiting to unload, and we'd just head down to the cannery. Unload at the cannery, and you'd get done faster.

Ms. Boswell: Here in Puget Sound, was there one main cannery? Would you usually work with one?

Mr. Mardesich: There was one here. There used to be a family by the name of McGuy. He was one of the primary owners of the cannery. I forgot what their name was, but some of the fishermen bought their cannery. They called it the Fisherman's Packing Corporation. They later shut that plant down when it needed a lot of work on the physical building, and they moved to Anacortes. The same company, the Fisherman's Packing Corporation, is still there.

Ms. Boswell: What about Alaska? Were there certain ones you went to?

Mr. Mardesich: Fishermen in those days didn't own anything. It was Pacific-American Fisheries out of Bellingham. The other one was the Everett Packing Company—that was its name before Fisherman's Packing bought it. All the old names: Sebastian-Stewart. They're still in existence, a lot of them, in Seattle. There used to be quite a few.

Ms. Boswell: Would you choose a cannery because it was near you or because it offered better prices?

Mr. Mardesich: Most of the time up there, the prices were pretty well fixed for the season. We used to go with certain canneries, especially up there, because who's going to go up there without having a market? So we made the deals with the canneries before we even left. The prices, generally everything was settled before we ever left.

Ms. Boswell: So it wasn't really based on the catch for that year, it was already predetermined?

Mr. Mardesich: The prices? Yes. The prices were predetermined. Once in awhile, they'd get into hollering for bonuses, or the cannery would scream that the prices are down, and they'd make some adjustments. Most of the time it was by agreement, because the cannery had to know how many boats it had, so they'd know how many people to bring in to process and all the rest of that. And the fisherman had to know they had a place to sell. So we contracted. This went on for years.

Ms. Boswell: Were there ever seasons when there just weren't a lot of fish, when you just couldn't get what you wanted?

Mr. Mardesich: There were times when it was a little lean, yes. But don't forget what I said, especially up in Alaska, in westward Alaska which is located just before the passes that go into the Bering Sea, we'd fish that area there and at times there were only six or eight boats in the whole doggone area, plus tenders. Most of them were

from Everett—the Martinis, my Dad, one or two from Seattle, one or two from Tacoma, that was it.

Ms. Boswell: Why were there so few? It sounds as though there were enough canneries.

Mr. Mardesich: There were. Up there it was a little different. There were only so many canneries and they took the fishermen that they figured would produce the most for them.

Down here, though, it was a more open thing. The various canneries would send out tenders and post prices and all that kind of thing on the rigging. But, again, most of the fishermen had some relationship with a cannery. These people here in Everett did, and they owned a cannery, so where are they going to sell? Deliver it to their own cannery.

A lot of them got into that company later. More fishermen got into it and it expanded and grew.

Ms. Boswell: Was there any competition then with Indian fishermen? Or did that not come until later?

Mr. Mardesich: There were Indian fishermen out there. The Indians, or locals, that fished in Alaska out to westward, we didn't see enough of them to put in your eye. Really, literally. There was no such thing. In southeast Alaska there was more of it. And down here, I never—you'd see the Indian fishermen once in a blue moon. They were not that involved in the fishery, in spite of what they say. There were very few who really got the large purse seiner-type boats. There were very few. It's only lately, in the last fifteen or twenty years, that they started having their own boats and demanding control of the fishery and all that. That's relatively new. It was never a problem in those days.

Ms. Boswell: I wondered if they had been involved earlier and then stopped?

Mr. Mardesich: As I say, out westward, in Alaska there, up north and to the west, there just weren't that many of them around.

We didn't fish right outside of their villages. They were usually fishing for a living near a river or a creek. Why were we worried about that? We were outside, where there were more fish. We never bothered them and they didn't worry about us. As more boats were put into the areas, then it became more of a problem.

Out in the Aleutians and westward, we never had any conflicts because they weren't out there. It's that simple. And that was true here in the old days. They used to fish in the rivers for what they wanted, they used to dry their fish, and all that was a drop in the bucket.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about the crews on these boats. Were they mainly family, or did your dad have to hire others, at least when you and your brother were still young?

Mr. Mardesich: We ended up with my brother and me; my older brother was a year older than I. We used to go out with my dad when we were kids. Not for a share or anything. We'd just go out. It was a vacation to us in Puget Sound. That started when we were babies. We went out, actually for a share, when I was sixteen. My brother—I might have been fifteen—he and I, both worked for one share. So the crew had no great problems with that because we were young, full of P and V.

An ordinary fishing boat in those days had nine men, the ordinary seiner. We had nine men. The boat took two shares, the net took two shares, and the nine men took a share apiece. Thirteen shares. When my brother and I went, we went for one share. So we had nine men, but we had only twelve shares, so the crew each got a little more money and they didn't worry too much about the kids coming. We were sort of the outlet for my dad's comments. Hey, if something was going wrong—"What are you guys doing?" This message got through to everybody.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about these other crew members. What were they like?

Mr. Mardesich: Early on, one of them was an uncle of mine. Mostly, they were fairly young, tough characters, really. Strong. They had to be to make a go of it. The captains were selective. They'd observe somebody and give him a call to see if he was interested. So a lot of them were strong, as they say, stout and strong. I remember

them that way. Most of them, I'd say were in that range of twenty-three to thirty-eight years of age.

Ms. Boswell: Your dad as captain—he essentially had to run all aspects of the boat?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. That's one thing that everyone understood—what could a guy do? He did what he was told to do, or they told him to get off the next time they hit the dock. "Get your gear and get off." It was quite tightly controlled, and the skipper was the boss. He had to be in those types of situations. If you've got three bosses on a boat that's out at sea, you're going to lose it. Somebody has to make the decisions and tell everybody what we're going to do. That's the way it works.

Ms. Boswell: What kind of style did he have? Was he gruff?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, no. He just kept that line of chatter up so that everybody had to hear it.

Ms. Boswell: You say he chattered a lot. Was he a storyteller? Can you remember some stories he told about the boat or about his life?

Mr. Mardesich: They'd argue politics and every other darn thing. We'd end up there, everybody would be on the deck at night, especially down here. Not so much up north, because the hours were too long. You'd get unloaded and collapse, so you could get up early the next morning. But down here, they'd quit about dusk and they'd start again about four or five in the morning, and the crews used to come around for an hour or two. Sometimes—are you familiar with the San Juans at all?

Ms. Boswell: Yes, a little bit.

Mr. Mardesich: Did you ever hear of a place called Friday Harbor? Outside of Friday Harbor, there are a couple of bays, Abaca Bay and Mitchell Bay, and they'd all come into those bays for protection from the wind and all that at night. They were nice, quiet little bays. They'd be tied up sometimes, fifteen boats along side of each other, hanging on to one or two pilings there. The cannery had driven the pilings to tie up to. Everybody would sit there and yak, yak, yak, and BS, and tell stories—mostly politics—arguing everything and giving somebody hell. In the Sound area, it was a very homogenous, tightly-knit group, generally speaking. They all knew each other with rare exceptions. They were friends.

I know people used to come to our house often for dinner. We used to even drive to Tacoma, sometimes, to go have dinner with his friends who were fishermen. It happened all over. We used to do that.

Ms. Boswell: What were his politics at that time?

Mr. Mardesich: I think he was a Democrat. I never heard him arguing in terms of Democrat or Republican, but they used to just talk about what was going on and what the government was doing, and what the damned Fish and Wildlife Department was doing, and by God, and yak, yak, yak. They ought to start the revolution. It was just chatter, chatter, chatter.

But, if they had something they felt strongly about, they didn't hesitate to let everybody know. Believe me, they were that way. They had hired some people who ran the cannery who were very educated, and they had big meetings with them. "You've got to go tell them this and that and the other," and if they thought the guy who was running the cannery didn't do it for them, they got a new guy to run the cannery. It was that simple. They were very strong that way as to what they wanted.

Ms. Boswell: About when was the purchase of the cannery?

Mr. Mardesich: Fisherman's Pack had to be in the early 1930s. I worked down there in the cannery when I was young, about twelve or thirteen years old, putting cans in cases and stuff like that.

Ms. Boswell: That would have been during the Depression, though.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. I think that's probably

why they bought it. I wouldn't be surprised. It never occurred to me, but I wouldn't be a darn bit surprised if the owners were having trouble. And, I'm not so sure they could operate, or were offering the fishermen nothing, and so the fishermen said, "Hey, you sell or we're going to build our own cannery." And they would have. So they bought what was then the Everett, and it became Fisherman's Packing Company.

Ms. Boswell: I'm afraid I don't know a whole lot about the fishing industry at that period. Was that fairly unusual for fishermen to do that? It seems to make sense to have the cannery.

Mr. Mardesich: It's the only time I ever saw it happen, when they sold Fishermen's Packing Corporation. And I haven't seen it since. Some company usually owns them.

Ms. Boswell: Did they run it as a cooperative?

Mr. Mardesich: It was run like a stock company. You knew where your market was and you delivered to your own place, obviously. Fishermen's Packing Company became one of the larger producers in the Puget Sound area for some time.

Ms. Boswell: Your dad went in with a number of other fishermen, is that how it came about?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. I think there were—of course it sounds like nothing—but way back in 1932, 1933, or 1934 they put a limit on what any one person could invest— something like $4,500. And there were only six or eight in the whole doggone fishing fleet that put that up. A lot of them had $1,000 or $500 invested. There were about half a dozen who had the max: Martinis, Paul Sr. and Vince. Two originally, my dad and a couple from Tacoma and a couple from Seattle. They were all, as I said, friends. They were all good fishermen; that's why they had the $4,500 to put up.

Ms. Boswell: That's what I was going to say. They had to have been successful.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, they were successful fishermen, and they couldn't see any great problem about packing fish. "What do you have to do in order to pack a fish? Stick it in a can," was their approach. It didn't bother them to get in.

Ms. Boswell: And the cannery was feasible, economically? It did work out for them?

Mr. Mardesich: It grew, and grew, and grew. No question about it. It became the biggest single producer of salmon in this area.

Ms. Boswell: Did they get involved in running it personally? Or did they hire people to run it?

Mr. Mardesich: They hired people. They were on the board of directors. They'd meet once a year, twice a year, and talk about what we're going to pay this year. It was a corporation and run like one. But they hired educated people to do the upper echelon—the offices and all that. As I say, they put some of us twelve- and thirteen-year-olds putting cans in the cases and stacking them up.

Ms. Boswell: Did your dad love the sea? How did he regard fishing?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. He enjoyed it. He liked it, sure. How could you be in the racket very long and stay there if you didn't? Of course, he didn't know anything else, really. He liked it.

Ms. Boswell: Did that transfer to his children, too? Did he talk to you a lot about the business?

Mr. Mardesich: No. It just grew. The issue was, as I said, not how much, but, hey, get more than your share. That was the whole issue, period. There was no debate about how much the shares were, just get it. That's the way we were raised.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about education. You and your brother were working a lot in the cannery and the boats and whatever. What was your family's position about education?

Mr. Mardesich: They insisted that we get educated. "Are you going to be a fisherman all

your life?" they'd say. Of course, that didn't bother me too much. I enjoyed it anyway.

When we graduated from high school and my brother wanted to go, and did go eventually, to law school. I didn't particularly want to go. I was going to stay fishing, except that he left for Seattle to go to the University of Washington and I was still home. The discussion every evening at dinner was about, "Hey, you're sitting here and your brother's down there getting educated." I said, "All right! All right!" About a week of that and I said, "All right, all right, I'll go." That's why I went to school.

Ms. Boswell: Was your brother your role model, too?

Mr. Mardesich: Although I was a year younger, I ended up in the same class as he did because he was fishing one year more than I, and then we went to law school and started together. He was more interested in education than I was.

Ms. Boswell: Let me step back for a minute and ask you about growing up in Everett, and education generally. You were six when you came up here. Did you start school here? Was that your first school experience?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I must have gone to kindergarten, because I have a recollection of school in California. Then, of course, I probably started again with kindergarten or first grade when we got here. All of it was right here in Everett, high school, and the whole bit.

I was going to stay fishing and my brother was going to go to college, and man alive, I couldn't stand that jabbering every night, and so I said, "Okay, I'll go."

Ms. Boswell: Who was the main proponent of education, your dad or mom?

Mr. Mardesich: My dad. He would preach endlessly. "You're going to get nowhere without an education."

I said, "I don't know, this is a pretty nice house you've got, Dad." So, as I say, after about a week of listening to this harangue, I decided it was simpler to go to school. We went to law school at the University of Washington.

Ms. Boswell: When you had been in high school in Everett, what had been your main interests?

Mr. Mardesich: I had no great interest in any particular subject. We took all the regular courses: mathematics, English, etc., but I didn't get into any of the other activities such as music and all those things.

Ms. Boswell: What about debate, or politics, or clubs?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't do any of that.

Ms. Boswell: Did you go to the University of Washington as an undergraduate, and then you took a law degree?

Mr. Mardesich: No, we went to Seattle University first. In those days, when we first started, you had to have four years of undergraduate and then you went to law school. Originally, four years. Then they later cut it to three years of undergraduate, and three and one half years of law school, and then just three years of law school. Why they cut it down I never knew, except that they did probably because they had more kids coming in and on and on. We got our law degrees. Then my brother went to work in the prosecutor's office after that winter quarter we graduated.

Did you ever hear of John Salter? John Salter used to be Henry Jackson's administrative assistant. Henry Jackson ran for the prosecutor's office here in town in 1938. My brother and I knew John Salter, and that's how, eventually, my brother went to work for the prosecutor's office his first year out of law school.

I was working on the nets to get ready for the next year, the next season, and he went north that year, and he was lost. He and my dad, and three other crew members. We lost the boat and he was lost. It was the last season he had intended to go to Alaska. He always had an interest in politics. Undoubtedly, had he lived, he would have become involved in politics because of our friendship with

John Salter—Scoop's administrative assistant.

My brother ran for the Legislature in 1948 and was elected. Then he was killed, and I was appointed. Of course, Mr. Salter's fine finger was in there. And Henry Jackson's, I'm sure. He just passed the word, and bang-o Augie got the appointment. That's how I got into politics. Not that I desired to or anything else. "Augie, you're going to get the appointment, period." That's how I ended up in Olympia.

Ms. Boswell: Do you mind if we talk about that? The dangers of fishing? Was that something that was always present?

Mr. Mardesich: There's always something happening in the fishing business, you know. I know part of the problem is that it's so competitive that you're out there fishing sometimes when you shouldn't be. The seas are too rough, the weather is too severe. But the other guy does it, so you do it.

Ms. Boswell: Had there been any earlier accidents?

Mr. Mardesich: There's always accidents out there, sure. What the heck, you pick up the paper—last week there was some boat that went down with three or four guys on it.

Ms. Boswell: On your dad's boat, had he ever had any big problems before that?

Mr. Mardesich: No. That happened up in Alaska, in the Aleutians. That was the only time he had any big accidents. We had some ferocious winds, rough seas, and all that.

Ms. Boswell: What do you remember about that particular trip? Was it like any other trip?

Mr. Mardesich: In that area there's a volcano right there before the Aleutian chain starts. It must be that thing that starts the wind howling there. It comes down off of that peak with ice and snow. We'd be sometimes sitting right out there, outside of it, nice weather, nice and flat. And before we could get our net on board, we'd have a hell of a time pulling it in, because the wind would be blowing so hard you could hardly stand up on the deck. Just all of a sudden, wham, it's storming something fierce. It taught you to be a little bit careful. But, sometimes you had no warning.

Ms. Boswell: There's never a warning, it just happens?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. That's where it was lost, right there near the volcano. We lost the boat.

Ms. Boswell: Was it just a freak storm that came up?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. It was one of those blows that came up. It was getting worse all the time, and we were pulling out—there was a little cove where we had anchored, but that was no protection. We'd pulled out of there to go to another place that was closer and tighter controlled from winds and weather, better coverage. And it rolled over in the wind.

Ms. Boswell: Looking back, do you remember that moment when it rolled over?

Mr. Mardesich: I remember it very well. I was down in the lower part of the boat, and my thought was very simple: get the heck out of there. The water was pouring in.

Ms. Boswell: Now they have the suits people put on for protection when someone falls overboard. Did you have anything like that?

Mr. Mardesich: We had life preservers, but we didn't have any suits at all. It happened so suddenly that there was no time to prepare.

Ms. Boswell: You couldn't really do anything about it?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Actually, my dad didn't drown—he had been hit. We dragged him out of the pilot house. My brother had been trapped down there for a little longer, so he was not in good shape, but we dragged him out. We were grabbing onto things that would float—hatch covers. My

brother was holding my dad's body. My brother was still okay except that just as other boats came to save us, he slipped off one of the hatch covers; he lost it and away he went. He was drowned. I and a couple of other young guys were saved, three of us. The rest, my dad and my brother, and five others were lost.

Ms. Boswell: Were you just floating on something? You grabbed onto something?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. By that time I had found a piece of timber off the boat and held onto it.

Ms. Boswell: Weren't the waters freezing?

Mr. Mardesich: You can say that again. That water up there is cold as heck. Matter of fact, when they pulled me out—I'm told this—they laid me on a table in the galley and they were just beating me to warm me up.

Ms. Boswell: Did the rescuers get there fairly quickly? They must have. You couldn't have been in that water very long.

Mr. Mardesich: We thought they were reasonably quick to get us.

Ms. Boswell: But the storm was still raging?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, it was still going. Otherwise, if they hadn't, we'd have all been frozen and gone.

Ms. Boswell: So, there aren't such things on those boats as real life-boats?

Mr. Mardesich: Those things, no. We have what we call skiffs. It was on the other end of the net. But that is latched down in a storm to keep it from falling overboard. The boat just rolled over from the waves and the wind.

Ms. Boswell: How big a boat was this? Was this still forty-five feet?

Mr. Mardesich: No. That was the old *Sunset.* She must have been about sixty-five feet.

Ms. Boswell: All this had happened. How did you feel?

Mr. Mardesich: You recognize it for what it is. Other boats came, too, that time, and they put us all on one boat and had them run us in to the cannery. They called ahead for a plane to take us out to the airport, which was not too far away, to bring us back. That was the way it happened.

Ms. Boswell: Was this something that you always had with you, this idea that this could happen, or were you able to put that out of your mind?

Mr. Mardesich: I never, never gave it a thought that it could happen. Never did, to this day, and I went fishing a long time after that happened.

Ms. Boswell: It didn't change your opinion of fishing, or make you decide that you never wanted to do this again?

Mr. Mardesich: No. We came down here. It was still early and fishing season was just about to start out here. I chartered a boat that I got from a lady in Seattle. Her husband had just passed away and I chartered his vessel. This happened in late May up in Alaska, and I was out there fishing in late June, running a boat.

Ms. Boswell: Can you say, looking back, that that was sort of a test of yourself? Why did you do it?

Mr. Mardesich: That's what I was raised in, and that's what we did. When the fishing season opens and there's a boat available, let's go.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever look at it as a tribute to your dad? Did that ever enter into it?

Mr. Mardesich: I never gave it that thought, but as I said, he raised us in fishing and just got bigger boats all the time.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about your mom. How did she handle all of this?

Mr. Mardesich: My mother took it very hard, of course, because she lost a son and a husband at

the same time. And she had a diagnosis of cancer, and she died the next year. I figure that happened in May one year, I went up north the next year, myself with our ship, and I got called back to Everett because she had passed away that next year.

Ms. Boswell: Was she frightened for your dad when he went out?

Mr. Mardesich: She never said anything about being frightened for him, no. I wouldn't be surprised when the weather was bad, she might give it a thought. She never said anything about it. Probably didn't want to scare the kids.

Ms. Boswell: How many kids were there? Your brother was what, one year older than you?

Mr. Mardesich: One year older, and I had two other brothers, who were four and five years younger. They are doctors down in California, now.

Ms. Boswell: And no sisters?

Mr. Mardesich: No sisters. I thought that rather displayed good judgment on my father's part, don't you?

Ms. Boswell: I don't know. If I were your mother, I would have hoped for a little relief from all these fishing men.

Mr. Mardesich: And all the dirty clothes they'd haul in every week, or whenever.

Ms. Boswell: Did your younger brothers get into the fishing business?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, they did get into it. They went fishing with us. They went up with me, too, in the summers, on the bigger ship I had. Then they went to medical school. Of course, they quit fishing when they went to medical school, because it was a full-time occupation for them.

Ms. Boswell: Did you help to put them through with the fishing business?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, sure. Put them through school and all that. That's why I can lord it over them, now—"Who paid for your education?"

Ms. Boswell: Did you love it, too? Did you go back because you liked it, or because you felt like you had to do it?

Mr. Mardesich: Number one, I didn't particularly care to practice law. I had no interest in it, even though I was educated in it.

Number two, we now had a ship. And we had an interest in a larger boat, too. That was also with other partners going to Alaska. And then, all of a sudden, you're helping to run the operation. It was that simple. I was in it all of a sudden.

Then we got more boats and all that. We ended up with twenty-four gill net boats. You've heard of a fellow by the name of Byrd, Admiral Byrd, who helped explore the Antarctic? One of the vessels he used was the *North Star*, built extra heavy to take on that ice. She was a 225-foot by 44-foot vessel, which we bought after his trips.

Ms. Boswell: You used that for fishing, then?

Mr. Mardesich: We used that and refrigerated the whole thing. We built, eventually, twenty-four gill netters that we picked right up on deck, stacked them up. We had our own fleet to go with it.

Ms. Boswell: When the boat went down in Alaska, at that point in time was that your only boat, or did you already have an interest in another boat?

Mr. Mardesich: We had an interest in a larger one at that time, too. It was called the *Pacific Queen*. It was 187 feet long.

Ms. Boswell: But somebody else would take that one out?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, there was another guy managing that one. I was just beginning to get involved in the business.

Ms. Boswell: Then you chartered a boat to go out that next year after the accident?

Mr. Mardesich: Right after that, the next month. I fished here in Puget Sound. Then I bought a purse seiner after that.

Ms. Boswell: At the same time that was happening, you were in the Legislature, too?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. I was in the Legislature, starting in 1950. There was a special session called in 1950 and my brother had been elected for the 1949 year. He was killed in 1949, in the summer. He went to the 1949 January session. He was killed that summer and I was appointed to fill his position and went to the 1950 special session. That's how I got into politics. That Salter guy did it to me, and I've never forgiven him.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about how you got to know him and how you got to know Henry Jackson.

Mr. Mardesich: We got to know Jackson through Johnny Salter. We used to know Johnny because he was helping Jackson, even at the time Jackson ran for the prosecutor's office. We got to know Johnny because—I don't know exactly how to put this—we used to spend some time in the same bar. We used to go down most of the time to the yacht club, and that's where I think—I'm sure we did—we met there. Then he talked my brother into running for the Legislature.

Ms. Boswell: Was there a sort of "hang-out" for fishermen, when you were not out fishing? Were there places where you gathered, particular taverns or anyplace else?

Mr. Mardesich: Not particularly. But there were young guys at the yacht club and those types of places, the Elks Club, the yacht club, where we were members from way back when. My dad was in the Elks Club and he bought both my brother and me life memberships in the thing. The Elks Club has regretted that ever since, because I've lasted a long time.

Ms. Boswell: Was your dad, or you and your brother, active in other Everett activities or clubs?

Mr. Mardesich: My dad? No. He was a member at the Elks. He used to go down there. He also used to go to a club, a cardroom, which used to be on the corner of Hewitt and Colby, with an upstairs card room called Brewsters. He used to go down there and play cards. That and the Elks Club were his recreation. As I say, when we came of age, he bought us life memberships in the Elks.

Ms. Boswell: Would the Elks at that time be primarily a social activity?

Mr. Mardesich: The Elks back then was a much more social place than it is nowadays. I suppose it's still social—I know that it is—but in those days it was more of a center of activity, because those were the only places where they could serve drinks in the old days. You didn't have bars except in clubs, which were private. That's why the Elks Club and the few other clubs like that were very popular and did very well for themselves.

Ms. Boswell: The first thing I think of when I think of Everett, is the water and the fishing, and now, of course, the naval station. But the other thing I think of, more as a historian, is the timber industry. Was there any kind of correlation or cross interests with those industries, or were they really separate?

Mr. Mardesich: They were right down on the waterfront, all along here there were mills, right down here below our home. There must have been half a dozen lumber mills along the waterfront, half a dozen at least. But we had no connection with them.

In fact, we used to swim at a place right down here which had a lovely beach, and then along came some group and put a pulp mill on it—Everett Pulp and Paper. We never forgave them for ruining our swimming area.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of the people who worked in the mills, did they socialize particularly with the fishermen?

Mr. Mardesich: We knew people and all that. But the fishing group was a large enough group in itself. The Slavs did a lot of socializing amongst themselves. Thanksgiving would be

somewhere, Christmas over here, everybody taking their turn celebrating in one home one holiday, another on the next.

Ms. Boswell: What about the role of religion? Did your religion play much of a role in your activities?

Mr. Mardesich: All the Slavs were Catholic. Only those of us who were such good Catholics used to go to church. On occasion, the priest used to come out to the house to make sure we all got to church and primarily to pick up their checks from my dad.

Ms. Boswell: Would you consider your father a religious man?

Mr. Mardesich: You could see the background. He wouldn't give a sermon at the table or any of that, but it was prevalent at every meal.

Ms. Boswell: Did they bless the boats when they went out? Were there any kinds of rituals like that?

Mr. Mardesich: No. The priest used to come down because he knew all these guys, but I don't think there was necessarily a ritual. The day they'd leave for the north, there'd be about five or six of the purse seine boats getting together—the local boys, the Everett people—and we'd go off to Hat Island, drop the old anchor, and everybody's family and friends would have a big cook-out on the island every year. Some of the boats that were not going to Alaska would take everybody in and we'd leave from there and head north after the big party.

Ms. Boswell: So it was sort of a big send-off?

Mr. Mardesich: We'd cook whole pigs, whole lambs, roasting them there and turning them once in awhile. It was quite an affair. Then, as I say, those four or five of us who were from Everett going north would put our families back on two, three, or four of the boats that had come just for the picnic, and all the other Slavs in town, and we'd head north and they'd come back to Everett.

Ms. Boswell: Was there a similar celebration when you came back?

Mr. Mardesich: Not particularly, but everybody was in a hurry to hit the beach and get off the boats. You'd been on it for two and a half months steady. There wasn't too much of a celebration coming back, no.

Ms. Boswell: Was there ever any drinking on the boats?

Mr. Mardesich: Only to the extent that we used to drink wine with our meals, and there was always booze. I never saw any heavy drinking on the boat. We'd take a lot of liquor with us, wine, primarily, because we'd have wine with our lunches and wine with our dinners. Once in awhile we'd drink some coffee for a change.

Ms. Boswell: That's a very European custom.

Mr. Mardesich: Not only did we take these barrels of wine in the hatch, we tied one on each side of the bow, fifty-gallon barrels full of wine.

Ms. Boswell: Are you serious?

Mr. Mardesich: You bet I'm serious, yes. We used to take in our hatch—way up in a dry corner back in the stern—we used to take sixty boxes of raisins. When we'd run out of the wine, we'd make wine out of the raisins and put it in the barrels, stand them on end, take the covers off the top, off of one of the ends, stick the raisins in there, fill it with water and make wine out of the raisins. We left it and it would start cooking and all that.

Ms. Boswell: Fermenting?

Mr. Mardesich: Fermenting. And then we'd drain it off. Then we'd try to get the fish drunk by throwing the raisins overboard so we could catch them easier.

Ms. Boswell: What about food? What kind of food did you take up there with you?

Mr. Mardesich: Mostly canned stuff. But we used to take at least two sides of beef and hang them in the rigging. Wrap them heavily in cloth, in coarse cloth, and we'd take them un-aged so they would

age during the trip. We kept carving some out every day to eat. Then, when that was gone, we were onto the smoked hams, smoked lambs, that kind of stuff. We ate a lot more of the smoked stuff.

Ms. Boswell: When you went in to the canneries, you could pick up goods if you needed them?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, sure. They used to bring stuff for us, too. Canned stuff. We used to eat a heck of a lot of fish. We used to eat fish four evenings a week for dinner. In the canneries, they used to eat a lot of fish, but they had a refrigerator—a freezer there, but it wasn't that large. So, after we got through with what was hung in the rigging, they'd give us some meat once in awhile. But it was fish most of the time.

Ms. Boswell: Did you get tired of fish after having handled fish all day?

Mr. Mardesich: No. It was prepared different ways. We would eat stew, bouillabaisse, fried, even broiled. Baked. Every way.

Ms. Boswell: But mostly salmon?

Mr. Mardesich: Once in awhile we'd catch an octopus and we'd cook him up. We used to catch some bottom fish once in awhile that would simply get tangled because we fished in shallow waters of the Bering Sea. And we'd save all those—sole, flounder, and cod on occasion. So we had a little variety. And that raisin wine washes it all down.

Ms. Boswell: Was there a cook on board?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. We had a guy who cooked, but he was also a crew member. He helped on the nets.

Ms. Boswell: Were they usually pretty good cooks?

Mr. Mardesich: Ours was. They were good cooks, yes, they were. The first one that we had really was a hell of a good cook, but he used a lot of garlic! Until I got broken in on that garlic, it was tough. I mean it. He used to use it by the fist-full.

Ever tried bouillabaisse?

Ms. Boswell: Oh, yes. I like that.

Mr. Mardesich: The problem with most bouillabaisse is it's overcooked. You've got to cook the sauce and then throw the fish in for only a brief time. Most of those recipes let it stay too long. You can't overcook fish because it loses its flavor and becomes dry.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have a lot of fish even when you weren't on the boat? At home, did you eat a lot of fish?

Mr. Mardesich: Once in awhile. Not a lot, though. When they'd come in on the weekend, they'd bring a fish. I think that fish was good for us. In retrospect, we didn't have so much of the other oils and all that.

Ms. Boswell: Let me ask you another question about the boat, while we're on the subject. When you got off the boat, was it hard to readjust to being on land having been on the boat that long?

Mr. Mardesich: No, never a problem either way. Going out or coming back, it never bothered me to adjust. Not at all. I have to admit that part of the reason probably was that I didn't get seasick, although some guys did. They'd get over it after a time. Oh, man. I don't know if I'd have stayed with it if I were like some of them. But it never bothered me. It's sort of like riding a roller coaster, sort of fun.

Ms. Boswell: I can ride a roller coaster, but I can't stand a boat long, myself. I go below the deck and I've had it.

Mr. Mardesich: It's amazing with some of those people, and they kept going back, and they never got over it. They still kept going fishing. They would get over it, but we'd go out to go to Alaska and the first three or four days they were a sight to behold. Believe me, it was something. Sick as dogs.

Ms. Boswell: Were there any remedies at that time for it? Today they've got medicinal things you can try.

Mr. Mardesich: No. My dad had a remedy: "Get your ass up on deck and get some fresh air." He'd give them heck, and I'm sure it did help them to get up and move and get that fresh air up there. Down below you had the bilge, you had the engine running, there was the gas smell, the oil, this, that, and the other—the stove, cooking, and everything else. The smoke. I think that's what got them half the time. My dad would say, "Get your ass up there." He'd give them hell, so they'd go up. Then they'd get over it.

Ms. Boswell: What was it like, growing up, being on the boat? You started working, you said, at the cannery as young as twelve. What did that do in terms of your growing up? Do you think you matured faster?

Mr. Mardesich: I always thought it stunted my growth!

Ms. Boswell: Oh, yes! Did it interfere with childhood friendships?

Mr. Mardesich: No. When we came back to school we had all those friends. As a matter of fact, we played football down on the empty lots near the house. We had one of the best scrub football teams in the area.

Ms. Boswell: Did most of the other kids work like that in the summer?

Mr. Mardesich: The Slav kids that I knew? Oh, yes. Most of them, darn right they did. All of them that I knew were on boats. And most of them around Everett were on their fathers' boats.

Ms. Boswell: Is that where most of your childhood friends were, too? From the Slavic community?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, sure. As I say, there were half a dozen right here who were good fishermen, and they had their families with them most of the time.

Ms. Boswell: As a kid, did you really want to go out with your dad?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, sure. Especially when we all were small, they'd take us out there and they'd put us to work, even then. But, it was a vacation. You'd go out for a week, maybe two weeks, and enjoy it.

Ms. Boswell: When you started working at fifteen or sixteen and you and your brother shared a share, how much might you make in a trip?

Mr. Mardesich: It was more or less a seasonal thing. It varied very much. We had seasons, even in those days, where we made $5,000 per share, which was a hell of a lot of money in those days, between Alaska and here.

Ms. Boswell: And at fifteen or sixteen, what would you do with all that money?

Mr. Mardesich: You misunderstand the Slav culture. It wasn't my money, it was my dad's money. If we wanted half a buck to go to the movies, we'd ask him for it. Literally. We never saw a penny of it directly paid to us, except when we wanted money, we got it. If we were going to a movie, he'd give it to us. Whatever. It was not delegated to us as our share basis.

Ms. Boswell: But it was your family, and that was your duty?

Mr. Mardesich: That's right. I think that's why my dad was able to get into bigger boats later. He kept all that dough he made.

Ms. Boswell: Was the focus on family and having family work with you a cultural thing, or was it your dad's belief in particular?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know. I think that if you asked the Martinis boys here in town, it's undoubtedly the same. It's just the way it was. We were kids working for the family. It's as though we were out in the vineyards in the old country. What the heck, we were out there fishing for the family.

Ms. Boswell: You mentioned rivalry among the fishing community here. Was there rivalry with other ethnic communities who were also involved in the fishing industry? I'm thinking particularly of the Scandinavians.

Mr. Mardesich: There were a lot of Scandinavians, but most of them were from the Seattle area. I don't think that it ever worked out to any ethnic rivalry at all. We used to know them, they knew us, and we were friends.

Ms. Boswell: But they really didn't fish in the same area—on the same grounds?

Mr. Mardesich: They did, but when we were tied up at night one might sneak in there. The Slavs were pretty well tied together because they all spoke Slav.

Ms. Boswell: Did they continue to speak their native language, pretty much, all the way through their lives?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. All the way through is right.

Ms. Boswell: What about you? Did you ever learn?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. I had to. That's why my English is so convoluted!

CHAPTER 2

IN THE ARMY

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about your experience with World War II.

Mr. Mardesich: I was at the University of Washington at the time and they had that ROTC business there. We were in that, and then they formed us into groups of who wants out and who wants in. If you want out, then we're just going to send your name down to the draft board. And so I stayed in that ROTC deal for a year or two, I don't recall. That was in 1941. In 1942 they sent us out of there.

We went to Fort Warden in Wyoming first, for some basic training. Then they sent us back to the University of Washington for more training for officer candidacy. Finished that, then they made us officers—because obviously we were thoroughly trained and skillful by then!

I was in the Quartermaster Corps and they put me into a company that consisted of 212 blacks and four white officers. We were there at Fort Warden for about eight or nine months, and then they shipped us off to Europe.

Ms. Boswell: Where did you go in Europe?

Mr. Mardesich: We started out in England and a beautiful residence we stayed in there—it was a warehouse. This is of no consequence now, but the skipper literally cracked up. He was from the South, and having black troops was more than he could stomach. He literally went off his rocker. He was the captain, and there were the first lieutenant, and two second lieutenants. I was one of the second lieutenants, of course, having just started. After the captain cracked up, the first lieutenant took over in Europe, and he announced to the headquarters that it would be either transfer him out or he would go AWOL. He was serious about it, too. They transferred him out to another company, some other type of thing, I don't know what it was. The other second lieutenant and I had this company, 212 black men. We were in the supply groups, moving and delivering supplies.

Eventually, the other second lieutenant asked for a transfer, and I will never understand why they transferred him, because there were only the two of us left. I figured, he's gone, they're obviously going to put somebody back here. Nobody ever came. So I ended up with a company.

We ended up in Germany eventually—crossed the Rhine. That was our company's first real exposure to direct fire. I got sort of a kick out of it. The boys were all so gung-ho, but when those tracers were slipping by us, the place got real quiet. And we spent some time there, of course, until the end of the war.

When the war ended, I was almost in Munich. Then they shipped us—not the whole company—they shipped just the officers from various companies down to Marseilles for transfer to new companies going to the Pacific. We were waiting there for the companies to which we would be assigned, and the war started looking like it would be over, so they just kept us there for quite awhile. It was not a very difficult service in Marseilles. Anyway, we were there quite awhile. Eventually, the war ended over there and they shipped us out, back home.

Ms. Boswell: What about your feelings? You had this company and all these other officers had left. How did you feel about heading a black company? Did that bother you?

Mr. Mardesich: Being Slav, what the heck, we're probably as close as you could get! No, it didn't bother me at all, and I had no trouble with them. I picked out a couple of the biggest boys I could find in the company and one of the smarter ones, a real sharp kid, we made company clerk—he was a little guy. The other two I picked were a staff sergeant and a mess sergeant. The mess sergeant

was one husky son-of-a-gun, and the first sergeant was the biggest guy in the company, and I said, "If things don't go right, you let me know and we'll try to straighten it up. And if they still don't go right, I'll let you know when I'm going to be away for a couple of hours and you can straighten things up." It worked. I had no trouble whatsoever with them. I used to do probably more than most officers, especially if they were all fairly new. I used to get out and move stuff and work just like they did. Seeing me do as much or more than they did, they dug in. So I never had any trouble.

By golly, after the war they let us out. I was in Seattle one day about a year and a half later, maybe even longer than that, maybe two years and there was a guy that was coming this way and I was going that way, and we crossed and glanced at each other as we were walking. It was the little clerk. We both turned around and looked at each other at the same time. So we dropped into a restaurant with a bar and had an hour or so old-timing in there, and that's the last I've ever seen of any of them.

Ms. Boswell: So you haven't had any reunions or anything like that?

Mr. Mardesich: No. They had those for the group of people that were at the University of Washington being trained as officers, a few reunions with that group, which were primarily people that I knew in any event down there at the University of Washington. I've been to one or two of those, not many.

Ms. Boswell: What about some of your experiences in Germany, what really sticks out for you about that time?

Mr. Mardesich: Number one, the thing that sticks out in my memory is that silence when we hit the firing.

Number two, when we got up to one of the areas up there and I had, must have been, twenty trucks in the company, not semis, but the regular Army trucks, which were loaded with supplies and our troops. We were moving forward one time and I'm running back and forth in the jeep trying to keep them coordinated and together, and on the way back to catch the back of the line, only half of them were there. What the heck happened? One of them had got behind for whatever reason and he turned in the wrong place and the rest of them followed him. So we had to stall around for quite awhile.

Actually, the funny part of that was that it was during the time that we were advancing very rapidly and the Germans were backing up very rapidly, and we got into the no-man's zone. I stopped every time I'd see somebody, "Hey, you know where we are, or who's where?"

"No, no, just keep moving." We kept moving ahead without even knowing for sure where we were supposed to be, because the place they had instructed us to be—instructed us to stop—had then been backed away from. And they just said, "Keep moving." We didn't know where or why, but we kept moving. Then, we were in resistance that was slight—even then—and we were well into Germany at the time.

So, those are the two things that I remember most. That's the advance when we were just told to keep moving, and the first one when we were crossing the Rhine. We were using little boats stacked with planking across them—they'd drive a truck on and take it across. We'd have dozens of those boats carrying the trucks over one at a time. As I say, we were under fire at that time because the river was a breaking point. They were on that side, and we were on the other side. The reaction of the troops—they're usually very boisterous and full of baloney and talk—there was silence until we got over to the other side.

It was during that same time we kept moving, kept advancing, after the German lines collapsed on the other side. They kept moving back and trying to regroup, and we just kept moving. So, those are the two instances that really stuck in my mind.

Ms. Boswell: Did you lose any of your men? Did you have any casualties?

Mr. Mardesich: Three or four. I think one of them was a casualty on purpose. I don't know whether it was or not, but I had great suspicions. He shot himself in the leg. But that was it. As I say, we were lucky as heck.

Ms. Boswell: How did your group get along with other troops? Were there any problems in that regard?

Mr. Mardesich: I never had any problems, no.

Another thing that sticks in my mind, a screwy thing, we were on—do you know what K-rations are? Dried stuff, this and that. We were on K-rations during that advance period for months. Everybody was sick and tired of it. I kept sending back for more supplies. I'd send two, three trucks back to pick up more supplies, and they'd come back with what could be put into a wheelbarrow to carry it for 200 men. That kept up a few times, and finally I was so sick and tired of those K-rations myself, and getting a line of baloney from the boys at the back, I said, "Come on." I took two trucks and went with them. We went to the headquarters and I told them what the situation was, and I wanted some supplies. So they gave me a requisition, pages of this and that, and they checked off so much of this and so much of that and so much of the other. I looked at it and it was maybe three wheelbarrows-full this time. So I delicately altered the figures to get a couple of truck loads.

So we went back and loaded up supplies and took off. Everybody was happy in the company about that. I thought that, well, one of these days they may catch up with me, but who knows, I may be dead and gone, so what's the difference? I never heard a word about it. But it did make me wonder, though.

What really bothered me, here we are on K-rations, we go back to get supplies, and get there during the late morning, early lunch. So, some of the officers that were there at the supply base said, "Come on up. We'll have lunch." We go to lunch and it's steak. And that's why I said, "Uh-huh, you guys sit here eating steaks and we're out with K-rations for a month." That's why I decided that if it said one case of this, I'd change it to 101 cases. So, we got two full truck loads of supplies.

Ms. Boswell: As you were going through Germany, how much—I don't want to say looting—but did people get supplies as they were going through?

Mr. Mardesich: Us? Did we get them? No, we didn't. Actually, when we were really moving, the towns—fairly large cities some of them—were absolutely deserted. Nobody on the streets. Obviously the reason was because the troops were there, their troops, and here we are coming. Man, I thought we were going to get it, because they're somewhere hidden around here. We're going to get it, driving down through the middle of those towns. Nobody. We'd look around at all the windows—not a soul. Once in a great while, you'd see somebody in a window, and that was in two or three towns as we moved through. After we stopped, of course, some of them started coming out.

We stopped wherever there was a building we could use for quarters. It was usually a warehouse or something like that. They told us, the officers—I was the only one left—but they told me to just go up and commandeer a house, tell them to get the heck out and move in. But I just stayed with the troops in the warehouse. The only thing uncomfortable about the warehouse was that it was a little cool—it was wintertime. But it wasn't bad at all. As I say, we got the supplies we needed, finally.

Ms. Boswell: You were a good officer, it sounds like. Because you were of Yugoslavian background, did you have a special sense about the Germans or about what had happened?

Mr. Mardesich: I had no feeling about it one way or the other. I had hoped that I might get into that Yugoslav area where I could speak the language, at least on a casual basis. Never did, though. Although they did discuss a move south—we had not taken all of Italy and Yugoslavia at that time. The troops were moving up through Italy and we were moving into Germany and all that.

Then we moved south when Germany started really collapsing. We went to Switzerland, just going through and hit northern Italy. We were going to be going south and/or east, further on the north end, the Adriatic end. And, by golly, we ran into some American scouts up in front of the other troops coming up from the south. They had moved very rapidly, too. And so, what the heck, where are we going and why, now? We stopped there for

a couple days. Then we eventually got the word to return to the north and go back into Germany, which we did. So, I never did really get to spend any time in the beautiful south.

Ms. Boswell: One of the issues that always comes up, especially with troops who were in Germany near the end, was knowledge about the concentration camps. Was that something you ran into?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. We ran into concentration camps and all that. The Germans were backing up and they were coming out of the concentration camps even as we approached the areas. A lot of them. Then we had the problem of taking care of those people for awhile, too.

Ms. Boswell: What was that like? For somebody in charge of supplies, that must have been pretty awful.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. That was a big problem. We had to send back for more all the time. They brought them forward because they didn't know how many—what the situation was. A lot of them were thin as heck. The ovens were there.

Ms. Boswell: You saw them?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. In one of the places. That had all stopped before we got there.

Ms. Boswell: But most of the people were still there?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. A lot of them, you bet there were.

Ms. Boswell: Were you surprised? Is this something you had expected, or had you heard that this might be happening?

Mr. Mardesich: We knew there were prisoners of war, we knew all that. We had not been told a heck of a lot. We were just troops moving. They didn't fill us in on all the details.

But we did hit a couple of those camps. One of them was just south of Berlin a little way. That was about the third one we saw. They were full of men. The ones when we got closer to Berlin, we hit not only American troops, but the Russian troops that they had captured. They were mixed together. In one camp, the one closest to Berlin, there were a lot of Russians in it. It didn't bother me so much, because of my knowledge of Slav—although Russian and Slav is different—we could get by. Over and over, repeat, and change the inflection, this, that and the other—we were able to talk to them.

Ms. Boswell: Could you tell whether there had been different treatment of them than of some of the American soldiers?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think that was particularly true during that later part of the war. The later part of the war, the Russians were moving very rapidly, too. They didn't just relax. Anything that was in the way, they just—bam, bam, bam and leveled a couple of cities just ahead of us.

I didn't notice any particular difference in the way the men looked in terms of treatment.

Ms. Boswell: Had prisoners of war been held in the same places where many of the Jews were held? Were there any common places, or were they separate?

Mr. Mardesich: In prisoner-of-war deals, I don't think they were held in common. At least it was not apparent to us if they were. The prisoner-of-war boys, it didn't take them long to figure out, hell, there's something going on here. They were getting out. It didn't take them long to figure that one out.

All they were asking was, "Hey, where's the chow?" That was about it. "What the hell have you got to eat?" Supplies were short, the Germans had not been moving supplies up because of the rapid advance on our part, and they were hungry. Period. Not that they were starving, because anything that moved—after we were moving ahead, the Germans were backing out—they were out grabbing whatever they could: chickens, eggs, pigs, everything, and cooking it.

Ms. Boswell: The Jewish people who were in

some of the camps as well, were the ones who were still left the weakest? What was that like?

Mr. Mardesich: They were there and were not in good shape from what I saw. They were thin as heck. But, as I say, that was the first thing we did was to bring new supplies for them.

Ms. Boswell: Once you got into some of the camps, for Jews in particular, how much time were you allowed to take care of them? Did you have the opportunity?

Mr. Mardesich: Very little. We kept moving. We just dropped supplies off and sent trucks back for more supplies. We didn't spend much time there with the camps. We were supposed to be going ahead all the time, which we did until the Russians advanced. All of a sudden, when we could have moved very easily, we could have moved into Berlin just like nothing, and they stopped us. I wanted to know what was going on. They stopped us because there was some agreement or some understanding—whether there was an agreement or not I don't know—but for some reason the Russians wanted to take Berlin. So we stopped before Berlin, and they did shoot it up a little bit.

Ms. Boswell: Did you see a lot of instances of Americans getting their revenge as they moved through?

Mr. Mardesich: No. If we were advancing, we moved the heavy equipment up and started shooting. As we moved ahead rapidly, no, I didn't see any of that going on.

But as we moved ahead rapidly in that later part of the war, there was no need to. We were moving. To set up heavy artillery takes a little time and a little monkey business and all that—why do it when you're moving and advancing? So, we didn't.

We were under Patton for awhile, and his theory was very simple—move. He didn't care what you did, but move. Keep going, keep going, keep going—that was his approach. You know, the funny part about it is—not the funny part—it was his character. It was typical of him. We'd be sloshing along with some of the troops, and we were in the trucks bringing supplies up, and there's guys walking, and here comes Patton in a jeep. I mean front line—talking it up to the boys, hollering and at 'em, and all that. Of course, that gave the kids a boost. I couldn't tell whether it bothered him or not—that was his nature, the way he operated.

Ms. Boswell: Did you respect that?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. We all did. Everybody. First general I'd ever seen out there. In that regard, it was a lift for them. He didn't stay up there too long, turned around and came back and the rest of it, but it made an impression, no question about it.

Ms. Boswell: Based on your experiences, what does it take to be a good leader? Obviously, you were a good leader. You stuck with it, unlike others, but what were the most important ingredients for leadership, do you think?

Mr. Mardesich: I never paid much attention to why it was happening, but I think it was, "Lay it out the way you see it and the way you want it, and make sure the boys understand that's the rule." That's why I picked those big boys to make it clear that what was an order was an order. We tried to figure out for sure what we were about, now and then. I never had any trouble.

I think part of leadership is just—the good part of it in my book—is just making it clear where you stand. And making it clear that that's what gets done, period. If I'm doing that, everybody understands. So it happened. You wanted something done, it happened.

We were out there moving supplies, and then we got to moving gas cans, and I'd be out there throwing the gas cans like everybody else, and I had no trouble whatsoever.

Ms. Boswell: Did the American officers have different ideas about leadership roles than the British Army or some of the other armies that you were fighting with?

Mr. Mardesich: Actually, we had very little exposure except to the British in the north for

awhile, when we were moving into Germany. They were—I had the feeling and it was true—they were a little more stilted. They were more formal, a lot more formal. I'd say that was the only real difference I noticed. Most of those people that I met—generally you'd meet some of them that were fairly high—they were all generally well-educated. Maybe it was that English accent that impressed me more. They were more stilted, more formal. When we'd meet, one, two, three, four, and my attitude was, "What are we trying to achieve? Forget the BS, we'll figure out ourselves how to do it."

Ms. Boswell: Was your brother in the Army, too?

Mr. Mardesich: No, he was in the Navy. He was in the Pacific.

Ms. Boswell: How did you two go different ways?

Mr. Mardesich: He went into the Navy. I tried to get into the Navy, too. What the heck, we'd been on fishing boats all our lives, and you would think that it would be of some advantage somewhere. We knew how to navigate when we were ten years old, shooting sextants and everything else. We were brought up on it.

He went in the Navy, and I went down and applied, too, but they told me my eyes were too bad. I said, "What's the difference how bad they are? When you're on a ship you've got the glasses with you." Someone made that decision, and that was it. So, I went to the Army.

Ms. Boswell: And they didn't mind your bad eyesight?

Mr. Mardesich: No. That didn't bother the Army.

Ms. Boswell: Just briefly, what were his experiences like? Were they quite different from yours?

Mr. Mardesich: He never really did talk that much about it. He ended up on what was called an ATR, an attack tug. They would accompany the ships, and if somebody was damaged they'd move in and try to get them out of the fray and back to base for repairs. He was way out there in the Pacific, and as the war ended that's where he ended up.

I know he was based for some time out of Hawaii and then they went to the Marshall Islands. I don't think he ever got beyond the Marshalls, but that's where they were based for awhile.

Ms. Boswell: So, you never really compared notes much once you got back and it was over and done with?

Mr. Mardesich: No.

Ms. Boswell: Just to follow through, you were at Marseilles but then they never ended up sending you to the Pacific?

Mr. Mardesich: No, they never did. We had expected to go. They held us there, and we were supposed to load within thirty days. Thirty, sixty, ninety days, then three, four, five, six months went by and we were still there. They never did. They finally said, "We're not going to send you." They were starting to send troops back again. We stayed there for months while they were shipping guys out. We got involved in helping ship people out.

As the troops came back, right outside of Marseilles there were a lot of rolling hills, and in one place as far as you could see, literally, it must have been two, three miles of jeeps: big rows, trucks of various size, heavy equipment, tanks. There were miles of them. Just bringing it all back, and moving the troops out. I don't know if that equipment ever came out of there. I doubt it like heck. The war was over and what were they going to be moving it back to the United States for? I don't know whether it ever came out, but I say I never saw the likes of it: acres and acres and acres of equipment.

Ms. Boswell: Where did they put you up in Marseilles during this time?

Mr. Mardesich: They had taken over some hotels, and I was in a small hotel. That's what they had me in. We stayed there for months. Crazy. But it was not a very difficult service, to say the least, in Marseilles.

And all this time that we'd been moving and all that, they were paying us. Nothing to do—

you're just sitting and waiting. I had a whole stack full of bills, and when they shipped us to Marseilles and we were ready to go, I still had that stack of bills in my foot locker—my wallet was full of them, and I managed to go through most of that in Marseilles.

Ms. Boswell: Entertaining the local ladies?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, just trying to keep the local business community going.

Ms. Boswell: In a situation like that, were there any problems with a black unit and the French?

Mr. Mardesich: We never had a problem. Never. Even in town we didn't have any problems with them. I never ran into a problem. I don't doubt that there were and all that business, but we never had any.

Ms. Boswell: Were the soldiers in your company from all over the United States or were they mostly Southern?

Mr. Mardesich: Mostly Southern. Although I had some from all over, they were mostly Southerners.

Ms. Boswell: Did you pretty much have the same group the whole time you were over there?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. It changed. They'd move people around, but I had mostly the same group for a couple of years.

Ms. Boswell: Once they finally figured out that they weren't going to send you to the Pacific and you stayed in Marseilles, did they ship you straight back to the United States?

Mr. Mardesich: The troops got sent out first. We stayed there quite awhile, and I think they weren't sure, but they just wanted to keep us handy in case they needed us. And the ships, we were probably short of ships. The stuff was designed to be going to the Pacific. A lot of us had taken off, and those that had started I assume ended up there. They'd come, and then they moved the troops out first. They took us last.

Ms. Boswell: When did you—is it deactivate? I don't know what the military term is—decommission?

Mr. Mardesich: They sent me back. I was at Camp Lee, Virginia, and we sat there on our fannies for a few months while they—I suspect there were so many people coming and going, releasing and all that—it was just a matter of paper. They had a tendency to forget about you for awhile. I was there a couple of months, and then they sent me out here to Fort Lewis. I was only there for a week. Then they released us.

It was in the spring when I got back. My brother had also been released from the Navy. He was released before I was, and we went to Alaska that year.

Ms. Boswell: To fish?

Mr. Mardesich: Fishing, yes. We lost the boat, and he was killed.

CHAPTER 3

APPOINTMENT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Ms. Boswell: When had your brother Tony first run for office?

Mr. Mardesich: When he first got back. He was there in 1949, before the boat went down. He was elected and served that session. He was elected in the last part of 1948 and served in the 1949 Legislature, and was killed that June, last of June. I was appointed in July to fill his term, because the governor had called a special session. They needed someone to do it and they appointed me. That's how I had my first experience with politics. Not the first experience, the first direct experience.

We'd had a friendship with John Salter for years before that, and he was, as I mentioned, Henry Jackson's administrative assistant. Jackson first ran for Snohomish County prosecutor. My brother, when we first got out of law school, was actually with the prosecutor's office for a month or two, and then when he got out, he went north to fish. That's when he ran for office, too. Again, it's because of his acquaintance with Scoop and John Salter.

Ms. Boswell: Had you actually finished law school before you went to the war?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I came back and finished.

Ms. Boswell: How many years did you have left, do you remember?

Mr. Mardesich: What they did, you know law school was four years when we first started, after your undergraduate work. When we were in ROTC, they kept you in school. You had certain military classes in which you went ahead with whatever you were in. We finished up a good part of it then, and when we got back we didn't have too much left to finish law school.

Not only was there less to finish because of the time we had put in, but they then had lowered the requirements from four years to three and one-half. Shortly after we got back, they lowered it to three years, so to become a lawyer you only had to put the three years in. We had spent some time already, so there wasn't too much of it to go.

Ms. Boswell: What was it like coming back and going back to school? Did you feel a lot different than you had before—than some of the other students who hadn't served?

Mr. Mardesich: You often wondered, what the heck? It was hard with the attitude of kids to just ignore the thing. That was my reaction, and I could understand it—they were young and just starting the University of Washington. They were like kids to us. We were only three, four years older. To me, they were like kids.

Ms. Boswell: Did you approach education and your studies differently, too?

Mr. Mardesich: I think I mentioned when we went to law school, I didn't particularly want to go to law school. I was going to get a boat and run it out fishing in Alaska and out here. But my brother wanted to go to law school because of his interest in politics, I'm sure. In any event, he did. I didn't want to go and I stayed home, but I had to listen to the family harass me, "Why don't you go to school? You ought to get out and do something for yourself; you can't just go fishing." I didn't understand why. They said, "It's all through, it's all through." I couldn't figure out why because my father had made good money and a lot of it.

But in any event, they wanted us to leave the fishing business. I suspect that part of that, in retrospect, was the fact that they had no education, neither my father nor my mother. They simply felt that it was a different structure or just to move up. And so, just to get away from the harassment, I

said, "All right, all right, I'll go." So, about a week or so after the school semester started, I went down and joined my brother, and went to the University of Washington law school.

Ms. Boswell: When you came back, was it better? Were you more focused?

Mr. Mardesich: I had no particular interest in the law. Never have had, but nevertheless, it was easier to focus. I never did bust my fanny studying law, I have to admit.

Ms. Boswell: So it didn't change once you got there? You were still indifferent to it?

Mr. Mardesich: No. It was just, "How much more time do we put in?"

Ms. Boswell: What stands out about the University of Washington experience?

Mr. Mardesich: The law school part of it?

Ms. Boswell: Yes. Anything?

Mr. Mardesich: I ran into a professor that I thought was a little off his rocker, but he was a smart son-of-a-gun. Shattuck. He impressed me a little.

Ms. Boswell: What did he teach?

Mr. Mardesich: Common Law. And he would try to trap you all the time, lead you down the path, and then try to catch you.

Ms. Boswell: Why did that appeal to you?

Mr. Mardesich: He was one you had to watch out for. You had to listen once in awhile. Some of the others, they were very nice people and all that. It was relatively easy—not too difficult. They just chatted. They taught out of the books and all that stuff, but with Shattuck and Common Law, he was trying to set you up. He was trying to trap you all the time. So you had to listen once in awhile.

Ms. Boswell: It never really occurred to you in law school that you might want to be in politics?

Mr. Mardesich: Not at all, because my brother already was. It didn't occur to me that I should be in politics. We used to always run around together. I used to run around with that bunch, Salter and all those people. We used to mix. We used to have parties together. They'd be over at our house for dinner, we'd be over to their place for dinner, so we got to be quite close. Not that I had any direct interest in it—it was because of my brother.

Ms. Boswell: So all the while you were in law school and even after coming back from the war, did you still plan on a fishing career?

Mr. Mardesich: I had no great plans, but when I got back—it's time to go fishing, only I'm going to run the boat for a change, instead of just being a crew member. But my father didn't particularly see that as the answer, and my mother, too. But she wouldn't let it rest. I must have listened to the speech at least two or three times a day during the meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. After awhile you get a little bored with it. "All right, I'll go."

Ms. Boswell: When you got back from the war, you mentioned that a lot of the other students just seemed like children compared to you. Was there a camaraderie with other veterans? Did the vets who were returning and coming back to school stick together, generally?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, because a lot of them went right back to the University of Washington because we were all from this area. So, part of the people who came back when I did or around the same time, so we saw each other and met again. We kept our contacts for a long time.

Ms. Boswell: I am interested in this notion of service and whether having been in the war and been through those kinds of experiences maybe changed or focused your notion of public service. Some people I've interviewed have said, "Yes, I came back and I did feel like that." Is that true in your case?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Not for me it didn't. I came

back, and it was over. The worst thing about coming back was the delay. Two months sitting on your fanny, doing nothing in Camp Lee, Virginia and all that. "What the hell's this delay for? Get me out of here." That was the reaction. Really, we had nothing to do. And what was their purpose? What are they going to do, train us some more? Take us out there and drop us around the field? No, we were just waiting.

Then they shipped us out here and I spent just a while out here—hardly got to see Fort Lewis.

Ms. Boswell: Having been in ROTC, after the war was over, did you still have commitments, or was that dropped?

Mr. Mardesich: Everybody was supposed to be in ROTC at the University of Washington. That's why we went through that. When I came back, ROTC, even if they had required it, I would have said, "No thanks, been there. If you want me to go, I won't come here." We'd had enough experience. But they didn't, after that. They didn't press us. They didn't even ask us about it.

Ms. Boswell: You finished up law school. Did you and your brother finish up at the same time?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, in 1948, in the winter quarter.

Ms. Boswell: What were your plans then?

Mr. Mardesich: We got back, and he went directly to the prosecutor's office because of his connections, and spent a few months there. I was going to get a boat and get ready to get fishing—line up a crew and all that. It was only a matter of three or four months before we'd have to get going. He didn't want to do it. Maybe better off, who knows, in retrospect. It was hard work and all that, but I always enjoyed fishing. It's a competitive type thing.

Ms. Boswell: So, you didn't think about the prosecutor's office or anything like that?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I had no particular interest in it whatsoever.

Ms. Boswell: What about his campaign? Did you get involved in that?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, a little bit. Sure. I put up a lot of signs and all that stuff. I don't recall that I made any speeches or anything.

Ms. Boswell: You were supportive of his political ambitions?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. If I wasn't going fishing, I may as well put up signs.

Ms. Boswell: What kind of a politician was your brother? How would you describe him?

Mr. Mardesich: He was interested in it, and I know darn well that his ambition was to eventually get to Congress. He would have run had he lived, no question about it. And probably made it because he had the organizational experience with Salter and Scoop and all that behind him. He undoubtedly would have made it. He would have ended up in Congress, I'm just sure as heck.

I, on the other hand, had no particular interest. They wanted me to take the job in Olympia, so I did.

Ms. Boswell: How did that come about? I know we talked last time about the accident and coming back home, and your wanting to go right back out and fish. How did they approach you about getting involved politically?

Mr. Mardesich: How did they propose it? Salter would spend a lot of time at our house and see Scoop once in awhile. They decided that they ought to make Augie the one, and they just passed the word, "You're the candidate. You're the one we're going to appoint."

I said, "What for?"

"That's the way it is," they said. Didn't bother me that much one way or the other, really. And so they arranged it. It was an appointment by the county commissioners. What are they going to do, tell Scoop, "Forget it, Scoop?" So it happened.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me what it was like. You first went down there for a special session.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. The special session—I don't even recall why the heck the governor called it. It must have been something to do with a tax or some darn thing. It only lasted a short time. So, I really had no great exposure to it, just meeting a few people and the rest of it.

There was a guy from Everett there, Wally Carmichael, who sort of took me under his wing and was pushing me, sort of educating me on the process. They all, of course, insisted I run again the next time, which I did. Then Carmichael started pushing me to take over a leadership post. Why, I don't know. I never did ask him. He kept pushing and pushing and pushing and talking it up, and pretty soon it happened. I suppose they didn't have anybody else with any desire, I don't know. He kept pushing, and I just went along for the ride. So they made me majority leader in the House eventually.

Ms. Boswell: That easy?

Mr. Mardesich: It was, really. I didn't have much to do with it. It was just other people always pushing, you know? If it wasn't Salter and Scoop, then it was Carmichael. There may have been a method to his madness. If I was Speaker, he'd get to be someone in terms of position and committees and all that. I don't know why he pushed, but he did.

Ms. Boswell: Going back, just for a minute, to that first session. Here's somebody who's been appointed to the position. You've had a family tragedy, and you're not overwhelmingly directed or interested in the Legislature, in politics. Did you like it? What was it like for you?

Mr. Mardesich: You met a lot of new people. I didn't mind it at all. As I say, it was some tax deal or some darn thing. I was not that well educated as to what the heck the issue was. You get some education while you're there. There's explanations for it and all that, but it all came about very quickly, and it didn't last long.

Of course, the next session was, "You've got to run." So they ran me. All I had to do was sign.

Ms. Boswell: And you won't say that you were interested by that time? That it had sort of grabbed you a little bit?

Mr. Mardesich: With more time, you become more deeply involved. It was always interesting, yes. As I say, it wasn't the first session, because I wasn't that deeply involved. I didn't even know too much about what was going on.

But after a few sessions, you were somewhat immersed in it. I suspect it may well have been in deference to the fact that I was appointed and all that, but I got good positions, good committees. I was on Ways and Means, Appropriations. I was on Judiciary, because of the law. My committee appointments were good ones, and kept us busy and involved. Being on Ways and Means, you get to learn the ins-and-outs of the whole thing in a hurry.

I used to do a fair amount of reading, quite a bit as a matter of fact. Even the bills I had not a darn thing to do with. I'd sit out there on the floor when nothing was happening—just formality—and be reading and glancing through these bills. Every once in awhile I'd wonder, just what the heck is this saying? I'd read it again and I still couldn't figure it out sometimes.

So I'd rise to ask the sponsors who had three or four names up there on the top of the bill, "Could they explain what this was all about?" That was a real awakening to me when they couldn't, on occasion. Even some of the language. They, I'm sure, had nothing to do with writing it or they'd know more about it than I did. But some of the writing was so poorly structured that it was difficult to understand, and I'd ask for explanations. I'd ask them to read it out loud, and pretty soon the rest of the boys would start looking at it. "Can anybody explain this? Can anybody understand it?" Somebody would stand up and move the bill back down to the foot of tomorrow's calendar. And they got it straightened out by the time it came up the next day. But that got me a sort of reputation. And I think that's what got Carmichael going. He saw it happening, and so he started pushing.

Ms. Boswell: Was Carmichael a mentor, to a degree? What about Howard Bargreen?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, Howard was there. Howard then ran for the Senate. He was only there, briefly, in the House, and later he went to the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: What about others down there in your earliest years? Others that you admired or didn't admire who were examples for you?

Mr. Mardesich: Old Charlie Hodde was the Speaker. And the old boy knew the ropes when it came to how to run the place and what was going on. He knew the ropes. There were people I got to know real well. Mort Frayn. Did you ever hear of him? He later became Speaker when the Republicans took over. He and I got to know each other very well. There were any number of them.

I never was that close to Bargreen. I don't know why, particularly, except we didn't get that close.

Ms. Boswell: When you first came in, Langlie was governor. Tell me what you remember about him, in particular. What was he like to work with?

Mr. Mardesich: I really didn't have much exposure at first. Later I did. There were a couple of occasions when he'd call a few of us down to talk to us. I was never that much impressed. I don't know why. He just never struck me. He obviously knew what he was doing and all that.

Ms. Boswell: Governor Langlie wasn't particularly dynamic?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't think he was, no. As I say, I didn't have that much exposure to him. A few meetings and all that.

Ms. Boswell: When you first came in, it was in the midst, or perhaps more toward the end, of the anti-Communist campaigns that had been going on at that time. Can you tell me about that kind of atmosphere?

Mr. Mardesich: The only real exposure I had to that was this man Canwell. I really didn't know anything about it. It was not that big a deal. He got a lot of press about it.

Ms. Boswell: That's what I wanted to follow up on. Did you ever sense, or was there a sense that there really was a threat from communism?

Mr. Mardesich: There was always that talk that they were going to take over the place. I never saw any evidence of it. The only thing I saw was the University of Washington professor. Everybody was after his fanny. He undoubtedly was—I think that was clear enough—that he was involved with them. But I didn't see him really pushing any communistic programs. I think he may have been what I would consider liberal. I was never that liberal, myself. It was maybe a consequence of being in Alaska, on a boat, that I got sort of conservative.

Anyway, as I say, he was there and there was a big rhubarb about it. It was a big press issue for awhile. But I didn't see where it was any great problem. At least I was not subjected to anything. Maybe he had given me up as a bad possibility and didn't work on me, I don't know. But I never saw any real overt actions on his part related to that subject of communism. I didn't ever see any threat.

Ms. Boswell: Canwell was sometimes compared to Senator Joe McCarthy.

Mr. Mardesich: At a later time. That was the other side of the fence.

Ms. Boswell: What about your own issues or ideas that you wanted to promote? Were there any in particular, once you did start running on your own, that you really wanted?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I didn't have any particular issues. Nor did I make any effort to introduce bills. There was more than you could shake a stick at down there, and I always felt that it might even be wise—although I don't know if it would be legal—to put a limitation on the number of bills you could have your name on, so that you learned something about what you wanted to do. Some people took great satisfaction in having their name on forty bills, none of which they literally knew anything about.

That never struck me that way. I never did

put my name on bills until later, when people started pursuing me and demanding and asking and so on. Then I would always take a quick glance at that bill before I put my name on it, too.

But, as I say, in those first sessions, I didn't have any great interest in being on bills, nor did I have any great agenda, other than there ought to be a balanced budget. Most of the time that I was there, I helped see to the fact that the budgets were balanced.

Later, when I became majority leader, other people would be in charge of some of the committees. I had enough to do. I used to still be on the committees, and take the lead sometimes, when I saw the boys were starting to get a little too liberal. Once in awhile I would have to say to the chairman, "Just hold it up. Stop right where you are while we analyze this," especially on the budget problem. "I want to see a whole listing of what's been appropriated, before we go a step further on this thing, because we're not going to go back and say we have half the people to take care of in the state and we've spent three quarters of the money. We've got to raise more taxes. No." Once in awhile we'd have tax increases, but they would be minor.

There was one old boy out of Bellingham, especially—he'd keep trying to put more stuff in the budget, and I'd have to call him on it. It's the only way you can do it. You can't just do it all. You've got to keep a recognition of how much money is available before you go and start doing that.

Of course, some things are more important than others. Education was always one of the big items. There were not too many other things other than education that got that much exposure, really, in those days.

Ms. Boswell: Were there any real Everett issues? Were there certain things that really had an impact on Everett or areas that needed to be concentrated on?

Mr. Mardesich: Road work sometimes, although the road work in those days was handled separately from the rest of the budget by the Transportation Committee. Julia Butler Hansen was the head of the Transportation Committee.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me a little about her. What did you think of her?

Mr. Mardesich: She was a tough character from down Skamokawa way. She was a tough one. She had a mind of her own and sort of ran her show with that committee.

Ms. Boswell: Was she respected?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. She was well liked. Actually, half the guys were afraid of her because if you crossed her, she'd cut what was in your district out of the highway budget. That never bothered me, though.

I'd just stand up on the floor and amend it. And then it was pretty good to be majority leader—everybody followed. I usually got what was supposed to be in the budget for the Snohomish County area. It was in the budget and stayed there, no matter what my floor position was.

One time when Chuck Moriarty and I rewrote the transportation budget in the Senate, I said, "This is the way we're going to do it." I'd just stood up, offered an amendment, did it, moved its adoption, and everybody voted it through. She said, "You dirty son-of-a-bitch," just about that loud. Everybody in the place looks around. I said, "Honey, you just didn't take care of it the way you were supposed to."

She was quite a character. She had a lot of guts—a driver. She wanted it her way, and I don't blame her for that. But she also learned to not fool with Snohomish County.

Ms. Boswell: There aren't a lot of clippings that I've found about this earliest period in the House, but there was one, when they were going to build the freeway, the main north-south freeway through Seattle, and you were the major spokesman for having that route changed.

Mr. Mardesich: I said it could have been a lot cheaper if it had been put further to the east. And it could have been, no question about it.

Then, Julia Butler Hansen, to prove she was no dummy, went after that Highway Department and had them build the bridge. Do you recall? You weren't that old. That bridge stayed there, unused

for some time. They built it, the major span over the canal, way before the road was built to it.

Ms. Boswell: Over the lake? What's now the 520 bridge, is that right?

Mr. Mardesich: No,the span across the canal that is now part of I-5. She put it in the budget, the money for that bridge, and it wasn't specified as such. They used to appropriate for the Highway Department just bang, bang, big figures, and she'd go in and tell them what to do. They paid attention to her because she wrote their budget. She had them build that bridge so they couldn't move the freeway, when she found out I was talking about moving it over to the east side where it would be cheaper. Give her credit, she knew how to handle it.

Ms. Boswell: What got you into making that an issue? Was it the savings?

Mr. Mardesich: Sure. I had no doubt in my mind, and then I said, 'Number one, it's cheaper. Number two, there are no real east-west thoroughfares in the city of Seattle, and if you put that bridge over there, down by the lake, you could put half a dozen routes out north-central Seattle, east-west freeways, for the same money. And you'll end up with a much more flexible and better traffic system because you get off now and you want to go off the freeway, you want to go to Lake Washington, and you've got to go two or three miles down the lake with a traffic light every two blocks.

This was my thought. That we could, for the same amount of money, build east-west connections over Lake Washington, and have a real grid system. But, that was her decision to go ahead, and she had that bridge built. I said, "Julia, you did it this time."

Ms. Boswell: What about fisheries? Did you get involved with that?

Mr. Mardesich: I stayed out of fisheries because I felt that it would have the appearance of having a personal interest in what was going on. So I refused to take fisheries. No one ever got on my back about it, even the fishermen. I suppose they figured that if anything really hits the fan, they can get me involved. But I stayed off of it because I didn't want the appearance of being too closely connected.

Ms. Boswell: You were mentioning about getting into the habit of really reading bills. Again, is that something that just came to you, out of your own interest? Was that something that anybody mentored you on?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose it came from being in law school and doing some of that reading that you had to do. I read at least half of what they wanted us to read. In any event, when I first got there, you really don't have that much to do when you're a freshman. Other people are doing the writing of the bills and they're handling them in committee. That's when I started to look into the next day's calendar. Toward the end of the session, it became very difficult, matter of fact almost impossible. On the ordinary calendar they'd put six, eight, ten bills on, but when you got toward the end of the session, they'd put thirty bills on the calendar. How are you going to read them?

So, I just started reading the darn stuff for lack of anything to do. As I read them, they got more interesting. I kept wondering on many occasions, now what the heck is this all about? What's the purpose? There must be something more behind it.

Ms. Boswell: As a freshman, you can't know from personal experience about all of these various issues.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh yes, the inside deals and all that. You're right.

Ms. Boswell: How do you get into that system? Who helps you or how do you find out about the issues involved and the background that you need?

Mr. Mardesich: One way to do it is ask. A good way to start is by asking the people who are involved. There are always one or two people who are really behind something and they will tell you. They're generally truthful. But, number one, you read the darn thing, then ask. There were lots of times, believe me, you wondered if there must be something more to this than meets the eye. And

there undoubtedly is.

If you ask enough questions, then those people who are involved become more cautious and they'll back off unless it's the obvious thing. I suspect that goes on today. People have interests, and they have a legislator that's helping them get something through, and the legislator might not even know what the heck it does or what the purpose is. Believe me.

How many bills does a legislator actually write? None. Once in awhile you'll rewrite, but as far as actually drafting bills? There are other people, all the lawyers, people who are directly interested in the issue.

Ms. Boswell: What about the staff?

Mr. Mardesich: In those days we had about six secretaries in the whole House. Committee chairmen had one person. That's it. There was usually a secretary to keep the minutes and all that stuff. Do the calendar for the committee and all that. There wasn't that much help. That's why I say, if you read the bills, people would begin listening to you.

I noticed that if you asked enough questions, people would begin listening and wondering, what the heck? Then pretty soon they'd start checking. Behavior like that builds up that particular image. I wasn't even thinking of that, but it happened. People would come over and ask me, "What does this bill do?"

"I don't know. I'll look at it."

Ms. Boswell: Did it surprise you, or were you expecting that kind of reaction?

Mr. Mardesich: That it would work that way?

Ms. Boswell: Yes. Or that people really didn't know what they were voting on or even sometimes sponsoring?

Mr. Mardesich: One problem is that there is so much going on. Especially if you were on four or five committees. Time after time, after time, and if you're trying to read the bills, it was just a heck of a lot to handle. And then you have to go out in the evening and relax once in awhile, so that takes some time.

Ms. Boswell: What about lobbyists? I've interviewed some people who said that you also could find good lobbyists who really knew what they were talking about and who could help you with background.

Mr. Mardesich: There were a number of them. I was most impressed with Bud Coffey of Boeing as a lobbyist. There were a number of good ones, but Boeing had the best in my book.

Ms. Boswell: What made him so special? Why did he stand out from all the others?

Mr. Mardesich: Of course, maybe, because he knew I was reading the bills or something, you'd get the full explanation right there from the guy in ten minutes, bang. And when you read the bill, you find it does what he said. So, in my book, when Bud Coffey came in, I got the lowdown: one, two, three, and four, just laid out cold. That made him, in my opinion, the best lobbyist that was down there.

That's a lobbyist's job, explaining. Not only explaining, I guess, but trying to be friends. There were a number of good lobbyists.

Ms. Boswell: Who were some of the others?

Mr. Mardesich: In those days there were—we should have started this interviewing about three or four years ago before I became senile. I can see them. There were a number of good ones, no question about it.

Ms. Boswell: Mostly from big companies? Was that the case, then, or did they represent labor or other "special interests."

Mr. Mardesich: There was a good one from Spokane who would know issues, but he wouldn't explain them as well as Coffey did. He was there for quite awhile, and he represented primarily Washington Public Power. There were a number of good ones.

Labor had some pretty good lobbyists. Joe Davis, of course, knew what the heck he was

doing, and he knew what it was about. He and I tangled on a number of occasions when he'd walk in and tell me what to do. I said, "Joe, you don't understand this. You explain to me what you're doing or trying to do, and I will decide what I'm going to do." He knew his subject matter.

The Teamsters had some good lobby people. Once in awhile—what was his name? He was a good lobbyist, although he didn't come down very often. He had some other people come down.

The schools had some good lobbyists. A number of agency or government departments had some good lobbyists, and I kept wondering, why do we have the agency departments lobbying us? But they did.

Ms. Boswell: What about other legislators that you regarded highly?

Mr. Mardesich: There were some good ones, no question about it. Some people did a lot of floor work, and other people did a lot of work on bills, too—all that reading.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think you had an advantage as a lawyer?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think so, no. I don't think so at all. Legalese is in cases; it's not in bills. A bill is supposed to be clear and unequivocal and say what it's supposed to say. We're not talking ups and downs and arounds. Lawyers are trained to mix the words up, you know.

Ms. Boswell: Yes, but there were also a lot of lawyers in the Legislature, aren't there?

Mr. Mardesich: There used to be more of them than there are today. The place was half full of them at least. And I think that used to be a method of getting their name out. Lawyers were not allowed to advertise as they are today, and one method of getting your name out was to run for office: August Mardesich, Attorney at Law. It's advertising, but you can do it. I think that's why there were so many lawyers in the Legislature back then. And there were some sharp ones, plenty of them, no question about it.

Ms. Boswell: In the earliest years in your service, in particular, were there people who were there to make a buck? Did they have other agendas? You didn't get paid very much, so what was drawing these people there?

Mr. Mardesich: We got $100 a month. What did it start at when my brother was there—$10 a day while in session? They raised it. I don't think they got anything above the per diem while he was there. They raised it, they made the pay, I think, $100 a month. That was in the 1949 session. Per diem was about $18 a day. What do they make now: $35,000 almost, plus $80 a day during session for expenses.

Now that, that's bad. Why, outside of the fact that lawyers ran to get their names out to the public as attorneys, why would people run for a job that pays $100 a month, and takes nothing but a lot of time, unless they had some interest?

The farmers had a very good, solid group, and they were protecting the farmers' interests. The timber companies had people down there in the Legislature. But there's, to me, little logic in paying someone $100 a month for being in the Legislature and taking as much time as it did. You had to be retired, or it had to be some other interest. That's why it never bothered me to see the pay go up.

Ms. Boswell: I want to go back very quickly to that issue about being in the war and then getting into public service. Was there a sense of being part a group of legislators who were coming in after the war, that you've got some common background because you've been in the war, and you're somewhat more mature? Was there a sense of belonging to a class or group?

Mr. Mardesich: Never, as far as I was concerned. But I have no doubt that there was some of that, yes. The fact that I'd been in the Army, I just figured that's a waste of time I could just as well forget. There was really no purpose being in the Army, outside of the purpose of the war. To me, it meant nothing.

The education I got was because I was in school for awhile. I would have been in school anyway. My parents didn't want me hanging

around the house all the time; they wanted me to get an education. Outside of that, there's nothing that came out of the war as far as I was concerned. It was there and we did it.

When we got back, it was, for me, back to fishing, but I didn't go. I did later, but not at first.

Ms Boswell: You filled in for your brother and then you were elected yourself. What was the rest of your year like? What else did you do?

Mr. Mardesich: I was still fishing. Shortly after that, we invested in a larger ship that carried thirty-two gill-netters with it, and went to Alaska. We had partners in that boat, and then we got into an even larger one. Again, we had some partners in that. We had half a dozen partners in the latter venture.

Ms. Boswell: When you say "we," who do you mean?

Mr. Mardesich: My mother and brothers. We got into the second one after my brother and father were lost, and I operated it. I ran it. That was a 225-foot boat, the old *North Star*, that Byrd took to the South Pole.

Then we had a fleet of thirty-two foot gill net boats that we actually carried on deck with us—stacked them three deep. We would launch them up there and bring them all back at the end of the season. Fill up the big boat with fish, and come home.

The *North Star* was in 1951. The *Pacific Queen*, which was the other one, the first one, was 1949. We started in 1948 and didn't go up until 1949.

Ms. Boswell: You bought that one right after the accident?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. In 1949 was the accident, and then I got involved in the new one.

Ms. Boswell: Didn't that put a dent in the finances? How were you able to refinance these other big boats?

Mr. Mardesich: My father, as I say, was a very successful fisherman, so we had a little cash sitting around. The first one that sunk, we had about $28,000 or $30,000 insurance on what the boat was worth, so I just put that all back in. I got it from a wealthy family in Tacoma, two of them. I got into the *North Star* with the Petrich family, who owned Western Boat Building Company, and a fellow by the name of Mike Barovic, who was a theater owner in Tacoma and Puyallup. Do you remember that outdoor theater that was on the right side of the road when you were going south on old Highway 99, just outside of Tacoma?

Ms. Boswell: Were your younger brothers involved at all yet?

Mr. Mardesich: They were fishing with us up north, yes. They went north with me all the time until they went to school, when they went to medical school. And even the first year of medical school, in the summer, they came up one year. They stayed at it—medical school.

Ms. Boswell: I'm sure they pretty much had to at that point.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. I suppose later on, yes. They acted that way, at least.

Ms. Boswell: Did you practice law, too, while all this was happening?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I spent time with all these people. Archie Baker was a lawyer whom we knew. Same group: Salter, Baker, etc.

I moved into Baker's office simply because I had to have an office for the fishing company. So, I moved in there. We opened another office up in Seattle, but I stayed there and ran the fishing business out of the old office.

I did get involved in about three cases in my forty-five year legal career. One of them was when I first started, and I could see I wasn't particularly going to be happy with the law.

Ms. Boswell: What was that first case?

Mr. Mardesich: Some auto accident a guy had. We won it, by golly, but it just struck me that,

man, I've got to go through this kind of crap for the rest of my life? Talking to the people and getting the stories, and all that.

Ms. Boswell: What about for the fishing business? Did a legal background come in handy sometimes?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, to the extent that there were contracts constantly being made, and I wrote my own contracts up. I had plenty of examples of them, too: charters, working with the union, and writing contracts out. They had their own form, and I'd say, "We're going to buy this, we're going to buy this, we're going to reword this, reword that." Undoubtedly that was the legal background talking.

Ms. Boswell: But the political career seemed to fit into the schedule of fishing?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh yes, because at first Olympia, the Legislature, was January, February, and part of March. In May we would leave for Alaska. And even though the boat might be getting ready, the nets getting ready, this was nothing. As far as getting the boats ready and all that, I had fishermen that I'd known all my life who knew the racket, and I hired some of them on a full-time basis. It was no strain. Being away meant nothing. They got the ship ready, they got everything organized, and they did all the net work, the whole business. All I had to do was come after the session and get down and be sure everything got put together the way it was supposed to be, and away we'd go.

Even when the sessions started stretching out, when they started having special sessions, and stopping the clock at midnight of the last day, and we'd stay there a week and it became two weeks, and then somebody thought, "I don't think this is legal." And so they extended it. Pretty soon it was it was ninety days instead of sixty days, and then 120. It got tight. But it was never that bad. It was not impossible. It could be handled. As I say, part of it was because I had some good men down there running the show on the boat. Good, loyal employees, they were.

Ms. Boswell: What about family? Tell me, when you came back from the war and after, what about your personal life, if you don't mind my asking?

Mr. Mardesich: After the war, when I came back, as I said, my family wanted us to go to school and become lawyers. Even way before that, they demanded that we go. So we went. They said, "You only have a year to go, you might as well finish it."

Ms. Boswell: Then your dad died, and you said your mom died fairly soon thereafter. What about the rest of the kids?

Mr. Mardesich: There were two other brothers. They worked on the ship in the summer, and they were in school in the winter time. Then they went to medical school.

Ms. Boswell: Were you responsible for them? Were you the one who supported them in college?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, but what the heck, a lot of it had been left to us. They never raised the question. I had control of all the dough, and whatever they needed, they got. That's the way it operated.

Ms. Boswell: How old were they when your mother died?

Mr. Mardesich: One was five years younger than I, and the other was four. So, they were not kids, they were grown up.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have to be somewhat of a parent to them?

Mr. Mardesich: They were old enough to know what they were doing, and then it was school. I never had any problem holding that show together. I'd maybe have to sock them once in awhile. We all lived at the old house, and as I say, they went off to school.

Ms. Boswell: So, for those early years in the Legislature and on the boat, you were fairly foot-loose and single?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. Time was no problem.

Wherever I wanted to go or whatever I wanted to do was no problem at all.

Ms. Boswell: Let me quickly ask you about campaigning. Once you had to run for re-election, you indicated earlier that they, Salter and Jackson and others, got you involved. What about the campaign? Who ran the campaign?

Mr. Mardesich: Archie Baker did at first. They used to make me go to all the big Democratic functions. They used to try to get me to go speak here and there, and get into doing doorbelling and all that sort of thing. I never had any great desire to go doorbelling, and did very little of it. I did go to some of the big functions, political-type functions, generally speaking. Although later, I did go to some other types of functions. They had me speak in clubs, at events, anything and everything you could imagine.

Ms. Boswell: Do you remember your maiden speech, your first political speech?

Mr. Mardesich: I really don't. I just got up and gave a speech and I wondered later just what the hell I said.

Ms. Boswell: Did you like public speaking?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, it didn't bother me one way or the other, really. It did make me think of one thing—the first one where it had to be extemporaneous—it might be wise to jot down four or five words so you had something to follow. And I did that rather than go up totally unprepared to where you're liable to fluctuate all over the place.

Ms. Boswell: Did you write all your own material?

Mr. Mardesich: I never wrote a speech.

Ms. Boswell: You must have been comfortable, then.

Mr. Mardesich: You'd end up talking about sessions most of the time. What happened last time, what you're going to try to do this time, so there was no need to write it down. It was there. So I never prepared a written speech, ever, or gave a prepared speech, actually. You just talked on what you had been educated about in the process. You were reading bills down in Olympia and you'd know what's going on.

Especially, as you got to be a little bit higher up in the hierarchy, why you knew what was going on—what direction things would go and all that. Those were the things you spoke about. People were interested because it was about what was going to happen.

CHAPTER 4

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND HOUSE LEADERSHIP

Ms. Boswell: You were saying earlier that Carmichael pushed you into being majority leader. Is that really all it was? How did you get interested in ultimately becoming majority leader?

Mr. Mardesich: He's the one. It was one way for Carmichael to get what he wanted. In retrospect, I'm sure, and it even occurred to me then, the only reason he wanted it was to push Augie up there because he probably figured he couldn't get it. Here I was a lawyer, and there were mostly lawyers then, and he kept pushing me. He kept talking to people and talking to people. He did it. Then they proposed me and that was it.

Ms. Boswell: As majority leader, what did you do? What were your main duties?

Mr. Mardesich: Majority leader in the House is second in command to the Speaker. The Speaker is the head of Rules and all the rest. The majority leader runs all the floor action. He makes sure someone's going to present the bill, and this, that and the other. That they know what they're talking about. You organize the actual activity on the floor. Depending upon what you want to do, it can be very important, very critical, when something hits the floor. You can shove it around, put it in the background, move stuff ahead of it, and get away with it very easily.

That's what, I'm sure, Carmichael wanted. He wanted certain committees and certain things, and he knew that if Augie got on there, he'd get what he wanted.

Ms. Boswell: Why didn't he go for it himself?

Mr. Mardesich: He didn't figure he could do it.

Ms. Boswell: It sounds like it's some more of that maneuvering. You talked earlier about how you liked the maneuvering part of it.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, it was fun.

Ms. Boswell: Is majority leader the height of maneuvering, so to speak?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, my, it is that, believe me. When you stop to think of it, you have all those people who are on those bills, and I've often thought that it should be—except it's a constitutional question probably—that there ought to be a limit as to how many bills you can introduce in a session. This would make people read them and hesitate to put their name on something that was just junk. Now you get the situation where—even then—2,000 bills were introduced in each House? A lot of them are duplicates, but still, that's a lot of bills. The more bills that are introduced the more inclination there is to just pass them, pass them, pass them, regardless of whether they're necessary, good, bad, or indifferent. You get a great deal of junk.

Ms. Boswell: I can imagine that, but also the more you get passed?

Mr. Mardesich: It has that tendency, yes. And later I saw it happening where we only had passed 350 bills, so it was an issue that we should pass more. The House is passing more. Who cares whether it's 350, 190 or 400? Who cares as long as you've got the stuff out that needed to get out?

As I said, there are so many bills that are written with a particular purpose, and the language changes are very minor, but can be absolutely significant depending on what the issue is and how it is worded. People have an interest—those people who have those bills introduced, most of them.

Ms. Boswell: As majority leader, do you have the time now to read those bills like you did before?

Mr. Mardesich: Bill Gissberg used to sit down there and we used to take turns. If we didn't have time to finish it or it looked fishy, we would set it back a day or two, whatever. Except toward the end of the session the calendars get longer, and it becomes more difficult. Nobody can keep up with all the reading you should be doing. No one. You'd have to be one of those speed-readers and comprehend what you're reading, let alone just move fast.

Ms. Boswell: Ultimately, when you got more staff, did staff help to do some of that, too?

Mr. Mardesich: When I first started in the House there were no secretaries. In fact, if you were chairman of a committee, you had at least one person and maybe a secretary. On the major committees at least.

Then it changed to where everybody got a secretary and everybody got an assistant typist, and the committees had a staff of three, four, or five people. The bigger committees, of course, got more. I never had staff do too much of the reading of bills for me. I just did it myself. My staff used to always complain and I'd tell them, "Hey, I don't want to hear it. I don't want letters to come in and just get tossed out. I want to see them, period." My desk used to be piled high with bills, letters, and other correspondence.

One day I came in and I noticed that my desk was ninety percent cleaned up. I said, "What the hell?" My staff said, "I put them into packets. I organized them according to issues. I stacked them up this way and it's easy for you to go through."

I came back again a couple of days later and the desk is almost—where it was this deep, it's now down to this deep. I used to go back and read a lot after dinner until about eleven o'clock, and then I'd go out to some of the bars.

I came back down here one night, it must have been about eight o'clock, I was going to do some reading for two or three hours. The clean-up crew is there, the janitors. Outside of my office there's about three garbage cans full of stuff. I stopped and took a look at it and it was all my mail. I checked them all and there were three garbage cans full of mail. He had undoubtedly looked at them and thought they were just junky types.

I came back the next day and said, "By, golly, we're catching up, huh?"

"Uh-huh."

I said, "I didn't realize I was reading this much stuff, but I must be doing it."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah."

I said, "By the way, I had one here that I was trying to save, did you see it?"

He kept telling me how he'd been reviewing it and had been answering all the mail and this, that and the other. So, I said, "Well, well, well, just two nights ago I was outside this room and there were garbage cans full of my mail." Then he admitted it. But that's how we caught up on the mail.

Ms. Boswell: Better than a shredder. It just went right on out.

Mr. Mardesich: He was my number-one boy. I admit that most of it was probably nothing, but the reason I wanted to look at it was that it may be a very close friend of mine asking a question and I'd want to respond to him. I used to tell him, "Never throw mail away without opening it, because someone may have a check in there for us for the campaign."

Ms. Boswell: As a majority leader and head of the Democrats on the floor, you would be called floor leader, right?

Mr. Mardesich: In the House it was floor leader, majority floor leader. In the Senate it was majority leader. You were leader, period, floor and all.

Ms. Boswell: When did you start as floor leader in the House?

Mr. Mardesich: I had only been there four years or so.

Ms. Boswell: For awhile though, the Republicans had a majority. How does the job differ if you're in the minority as opposed to the majority?

Mr. Mardesich: If your boys aren't getting a fair play and you're in the minority, you stand up and start hammering. It's that simple. Or you step

across the aisle and say, "Hey, we want our boys to get some recognition here too, or we're going to start dragging our feet so you ain't going to get nothing done. We'll amend stuff 'till hell freezes over."

I always got along with the leaders on the other side. They were minority leaders most of the time. They were good people, too. As I say, I got along with them, and believe it or not, they'd appreciate you were doing some reading, too. They'd be over there talking to you about bills that they hadn't had time to catch up on themselves. "Have you had a chance to look at this one?" So it wasn't a one-way street.

Ms. Boswell: What else would distinguish somebody who would make a good majority leader or floor leader as opposed to somebody else? You know what's going on, you read the bills, you've got the reputation for that. What else, what other kinds of characteristics?

Mr. Mardesich: I think that generally speaking, they always felt I was fair: Give everybody a break or a chance, and all that. That's part of it. It was no strain for me; I liked most of them anyway.

When I went to the Senate and whipped Reuben Knoblauch around the ears the first time, why that got the message across.

Ms. Boswell: So you didn't have to do that so much in the House, that sort of whipping into line?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, it just happens. Don't forget though, you have two or three people who are with you, who are, generally speaking, the sharpies. People who know how to read people, who know how to talk to people. Those three or four get together.

We used to meet back in the office. "What's on the calendar? Anybody have any headaches or is something going wrong anywhere?" We used to do that darn near every day.

Ms. Boswell: Who was in this group with you in the House?

Mr. Mardesich: Frank Brouillet. Clark was one. He was a Republican, Newman Clark. Tom Copeland was a Republican also. Dewey Donohue used to sit down with us.

Ms. Boswell: Why would you get Republicans? How did that work?

Mr. Mardesich: "Come on back to the office." You'd want a Republican so that you'd see both sides of the issue and try to straighten it all out beforehand. Martin Durkan was in the House then, but he wasn't too close to me in the House.

Ms. Boswell: Dan Evans?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, Dan was there. He was minority leader when I was majority leader. He was majority leader then under the Republicans and I was minority leader. But we used to always kick stuff around. As I say, one thing about Dan, if he told you he was going to do something, he did it.

Ms. Boswell: So he would be a man of his word?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, he was a man of his word—no question. Here's another guy that was pretty sharp: Bernie Gallagher from Spokane. It used to change a little, you know. John Goldmark was a good legislator. He used to sit in every once in awhile.

After I cut Julia Butler Hansen's bridge off, she just didn't come back to my office for quite awhile.

Elmer Huntley was a good legislator, too. Mike McCormack used to do a lot of reading. He later went to Congress, but he was often in the know about what the bills were about. John McCutcheon was a good politician type—excellent.

Ms. Boswell: What do you mean by a politician type? Explain that.

Mr. Mardesich: "How should we do this one? Who was interested," and so on. "Who was trying to help?" Political stuff. He was a good politician.

And Chuck Moriarty. He and I, after we left the House, went over to the Senate and rewrote the whole highway budget. He got a real charge

out of that. I used to see him once in a great while in Seattle. He still laughed like heck about it.

There were a lot of people. We'd call certain people in if they had something on the calendar. We'd bring them into the meeting just to see exactly what was going on.

When he was Speaker, John O'Brien used to have his meetings with fewer of us, two or three of us.

Ms. Boswell: What is the relationship between Speaker of the House and the majority leader?

Mr. Mardesich: The Speaker is the one who guides, knocks the hammer, and recognizes certain people and so on. He is, ostensibly, the leader of the whole House. He is in a position to do a lot of things. He approves the appointments and all that sort of thing. If he has good control of half a dozen people in that House, a good relationship with them—not necessarily control, but you have to be flexible to control—if he has a good relationship with five or six people in that House, he can usually get what he wants.

Ms. Boswell: Gordon Sandison?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. For lining things up, putting things together and getting the troops lined up, Sandison was excellent.

Leonard Sawyer of course, later became Speaker. When he was young, he had a speech defect. He was a stutterer. I didn't realize it for years. Didn't know about it until we were sitting around and just chewing the fat one day. He overcame it with the help of a teacher in junior high school.

Ms. Boswell: And then he was able to be a public speaker?

Mr. Mardesich: That's right. Some teacher took him under her wing and got him out of it.

Ms. Boswell: What about the relationship between you as floor leader and the caucus leader? How did that relationship work?

Mr. Mardesich: The caucus leader is the one who does the banging of the gavel, the requisition of people and all that in the caucus when you're having a meeting. He, of course, got there also by virtue of having done it right and so on. Bob Bailey was our caucus leader for a long time.

But when it comes to the caucus action, usually it's incumbent on the leader to help explain what's going to be on that calendar and to explain some of the bills. That's one reason I did a lot of reading, too, so that I'd know what they were on so I could tell myself or correct somebody else. You'd often ask the people who introduced the bill to tell us about it in caucus. Often I'd end up correcting them on some point there. But that was the function in caucus of the majority leader: "Here's what we're going to be voting on and here's our position on it." And most people would go along with you.

Ms. Boswell: In those years, particularly in the 1950s in the House, how frequently did the caucus meet?

Mr. Mardesich: Every day.

Ms. Boswell: What was the order of business?

Mr. Mardesich: It was mostly the calendar.

Ms. Boswell: You would meet when, in the mornings, mostly?

Mr. Mardesich: Or in the afternoon. But it was usually in the morning before session. Or sometimes we'd go on the floor—and here is the reason for this—if you had it at eight o'clock, half the guys wouldn't be there. And if we were going into session at nine or ten, we'd stay on for about an hour or so, and then call a recess and go caucus from eleven to twelve, so that you'd have everybody there.

The primary function of the caucus was to clarify what was on the calendar and all that. Once in awhile you'd get into major arguments on a big issue. Once in awhile, but not very often.

Ms. Boswell: Did differences of opinion not happen all that often because of the leadership, or was there party unity?

Mr. Mardesich: You had differences of opinion. People would have differences of opinion on the issues and we'd do some arguing about it—usually Sandison and some of those people, you know. If I were taking a position, it's because we had had some discussion and I'd make a pitch. If somebody would stand up and object, Sandison would stand up and give his position, and one of my other boys would stand up and give his position. We'd wait awhile and see if anybody else wanted to take us on and if they did, one of my other boys would stand up and take him on. We'd have about five to two. That made up the minds in the caucus, generally.

Ms. Boswell: When you're saying "your boys," who are we talking about? The same people you were talking about earlier that you would lean on for support?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. Sandison, he was a great one as I said for lining things up. It was in 1957. Half these people—we'd be meeting, it would fluctuate depending on who he'd called in to the meeting as to what was on the calendar. We'd usually get someone who was a strong proponent of the bill to come into the meeting and tell us about it. There were never more than four, five, or six of us at those meetings.

In the Senate, when I got over there, it was a combined meeting, generally speaking, of Democrats and Republicans.

Ms. Boswell: A combined caucus?

Mr. Mardesich: No, not a caucus. A pre-caucus meeting. These would be meetings we'd have at 4:30 in the afternoon, whenever. Generally, we went over to Hubie Donohue. Donohue was chairman of Ways and Means when I was there, and he had a large office and a large hearing room, because he had fifteen to eighteen people on the committee. We used to go to his office and relax and talk the bills over, talk the calendar over, and it would be four or five of us who were Democrats and three or four who were Republicans—leadership on both sides. We had very little trouble in the Senate in handling the calendar and all that, because we'd ironed out all the problems ahead of time.

Ask any of those boys who were on the Republican leadership in those days and they will concede that they were asked for their input and it was given real consideration. They knew what was coming before anybody else did. They responded and threw in their two-bits worth. If somebody had a strong feeling on their side after they went to caucus, they'd come over and ask if we could hang onto this one for a day while we worked things out or figured it out. Cooperation was the name of the game. I think that was one of the reasons that in the Senate it was a real easy operation, because it was all settled. Three or four of them, three or four of us, it all worked itself out.

Even the budget. We'd get down to arguing the budget, even. We'd go into the budget committee meeting, Appropriations, and wham, wham, wham, bang! Get it over with in a hurry.

Ms. Boswell: But you didn't see so much of that cooperation in the House?

Mr. Mardesich: We did, but not as much as in the Senate, no. The House was more, I guess you could say, more of a dictatorship, literally, because there were a lot more people. They had half a dozen guys spread out who they met with all the time, and they worked on their little portion of that caucus group. They'd fill it out. They'd know what was going on out there with a measure, and they'd come in and say, "Hey, there's some question about this one." They each had eight, ten guys that they kept fairly close touch with—friends, usually, that they'd keep in close touch with. And so, it was okay that we'd decide to do something, they'd go out and tell their friends and see if there were any objections.

Whereas on the Republicans side, when we got over there, we had this joint meeting damn near every day. Have a few drinks. It was six o'clock sometimes before we'd go out and have a bite. It was automatic, almost. It was all settled in little meetings.

Ms. Boswell: What you were describing, I've heard referred to not so nicely as "backroom politics" or "good ol' boy" networks. Is that fair?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think it was the "ol' boy

network" business. Maybe there was some of that, but that may be a description of local politics more than in the Legislature, I would say. It wasn't that it was the "ol' boy network" and all of that, it was who you liked and who you trusted. It could be a brand new guy, but if he displayed some real get-up-and-go and some gray matter, why he was the one you worked with. Usually, they were the guys who'd been around awhile because they had displayed what it takes to do it.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of keeping the Democrats together, especially in the House, again, I've heard people say that it was a lot harder to keep the Democrats together behind something than the Republicans. Has that been your experience?

Mr. Mardesich: I would think that's so, and it was generally true, because we had, most of the time, a fairly good majority, a substantial majority. We had, if there were one hundred people—in round figures—in the House, there was forty-five of them and fifty-five of us, except that it usually was sixty or sixty-three of us, and fewer Republicans. The Republicans stuck together, and it was more difficult to keep the Democrats together, because of the fact that they usually had a majority of four or five or eight people or more, surplus. "You don't need my vote, go get somebody else's—na, na, na. Somebody in my district doesn't like it." That sort of thing. And so it was more difficult in that regard.

Whereas, in the Senate, as I say, we operated it differently. But anytime you have a large majority, you're going to have people deciding, "Hell, I'm going to do what I want to do even if I think they're right. Somebody in my district I'm taking care of." As I say, we didn't have that problem so much in the Senate, because the Republican leadership and the Democratic leadership had settled it all. It was only rarely when something came up that we hadn't really given some thought to. It was sort of automatic.

Ms. Boswell: Was the House in one sense more partisan, that you couldn't get the Republican leadership, for example, to work in that way?

Mr. Mardesich: They tended to be more partisan because they were trying to get a super-majority. They were always trying to get in on the politics-type stuff.

That wasn't true particularly in the Senate. I don't know why not, except that a lot of them were farmers over there and had been around a long time. A lot of them on the Democratic side in the leadership, we'd been around a long time, both in the House and in the Senate. You knew the guys and you knew who to trust and who you couldn't trust. You knew that if somebody told you they were going to do it, you didn't have to give it a thought. It was done.

Whereas, in the House, as I say, because of those flexible majorities, too big a majority, we had sometimes difficulty pinning them down. Everybody would want to get off of this one.

Wally Carmichael was one—never voted for a tax in his life. Voted for every appropriation Christ ever created. I used to give him hell. "I can't vote for a tax; people don't like taxes," he'd say.

"So you're voting for all the appropriations that I'm voting against, Carmichael, but you want me to vote for the tax, huh?" I'd say.

"Yeah," was his answer. Every once in awhile, as I say, I'd have to vote for a damn tax because so many people didn't want to vote for the tax, and yet they're out there voting for spending money: bang, bang, bang. "Okay, now you vote for the tax."

So, once in awhile we'd go back and we'd start hacking the budget. "Okay, you boys don't want it." Then pretty soon when they saw that happening, a few would crawl back on before we got to cutting their stuff. It was more maneuvering in the House than in the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: In that respect was it more fun? It seems as though most people want to get out of the House and go to the Senate, ultimately, if they want to stay in at all.

Mr. Mardesich: For one reason, it's every four years instead of every two years. You don't have to be campaigning all the time. In the House it's almost, for some people, a constant campaign. You're down there, bang-o, you're going to run next year again. It's a lot more public input, a lot more appearances before the public, a lot more

explaining to do to the public about why you did what you did. That used to bother a lot of people. If you weren't concerned with whether you were there or not, it didn't bother you.

Ms. Boswell: You made that transition. What made you decide you wanted to go to the Senate? Was it the campaign issues?

Mr. Mardesich: To four from every two years. I still feel that they ought to have four- and six-year campaigns. Four- and six-year terms. Two years, a guy has hardly time to get involved. Now, they have the restriction. What is it, twelve years now? They put the initiative through on term limits.

Of course, there's the other side of the coin. I've always felt that if you haven't figured it out in a year or two, you aren't ever going to figure it out. So what's the difference? Still, you learn it the hard way, and I've always felt, as I say, that people should not be having to worry. One reason I was always for term limits, you shouldn't have to worry about whether I'm going to get elected next year, because I vote a certain way.

Carmichael was against every tax. Nobody likes taxes. But, if you're not going to vote for the tax, you've got to raise the money you were spending. We used to have some good arguments about that. He never let it bother him, he'd always smile and laugh. Never got him to vote for a tax all the time he was there.

Ms. Boswell: In the caucus, is that where people would be honest and say, "I'm not voting for this for this reason."

Mr. Mardesich: Most of them would catch you on the floor or come to your office and they'd want to beg off. It was not usually in front of everyone else. Once in awhile someone would, for some issues, but most of the time it was see you in the office, see you out on the floor.

Ms. Boswell: And then if you had to do some arm-twisting, it was mostly trading?

Mr. Mardesich: Really, we didn't have too much of that. It wasn't the trading so much. If it was necessary, I would. Usually, it was just talking to people, "Hey, I need your vote—next time you want something, then what? We'll call off ten votes and you won't get it." So, that sort of thing.

And we could do it. Some of the guys, I didn't care whether I voted for something or against it or how I voted, literally. If you could get six or eight people with that attitude—and there were those who would—they'd teach somebody a lesson in a hurry. So they'd be less inclined to run the other way because they might get some bad publicity.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of that sort of give-and-take with the individuals to get their support, again, what role does the caucus leader play? Is that part of the job?

Mr. Mardesich: He can explain. He can talk and usually does. Bob Bailey was a good caucus leader in that respect. He's into them. Once in awhile, some of us would have to get up and start. But he kept up with what was going on, too. He'd usually do some of the explaining, or he'd have somebody explain it that was for the bill and all that. He did his homework.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever want to move from majority leader to Speaker? In terms of hierarchy, does it go caucus, majority leader, Speaker?

Mr. Mardesich: Right. Len Sawyer tried to talk me into running for Speaker. I told him, "I'm not interested in the damn thing. I've got enough to do." And yet he kept twisting my arm, twisting my arm, twisting my arm, and talking to me about it. I said, "Why don't you run? Why are you hassling me? You run."

"Well, if you'll support me, I will."

"All right."

Then I've got to take on John O'Brien. But then, at that point I figured, hell, John's been there already long enough. So I went in to see O'Brien and told him, "John, I can't support you this time because I already told Sawyer I'd support him. Now, I've either got to go back and tell him that's off, or now I'm telling you ahead of time that I'm not going to support you next time." That was the

last time he was Speaker. Sawyer got it, of course.

Ms. Boswell: And O'Brien?

Mr. Mardesich: He was just another member on the floor.

Ms. Boswell: Was there any payback for you after that?

Mr. Mardesich: No. He recognized it for what it was. Probably he felt that there ought to be, I don't know. But he never did really get that personal about it. Probably because he figured if he did, Augie might not appreciate it. Having run a fishing boat with a bunch of fishermen, you can be pretty mean sometimes.

Ms. Boswell: Bob Bailey once said that you used to say that you could be Speaker anytime you wanted, but you didn't want to work that hard and take it on. Is that true?

Mr. Mardesich: That's true.

Ms. Boswell: But he said that when it came to the Senate, you were a good worker and a brilliant member.

Mr. Mardesich: Well, I've said nice things about him, too. He was a good man, no two ways about that. He was the sincere type. If he said something, he meant it. If he said he was going to do something, he did it. A lot of people you can't say that about, you know. Not Bob Bailey. If he said that's the way it was going to be, and by golly, that's the way it was.

Ms. Boswell: Would people have said that about you, too?

Mr. Mardesich: I would assume. If I committed to something, that's it. I think that, without too darn much debate, people would say that if Augie said he was going to do something, he did it.

It's fun. It was fun for me, trying to get things done, and all the rest of that stuff. Trying to get people lined up, it was fun, no question about it.

Ms. Boswell: Were there parts of it you disliked? Was there some that wasn't fun?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Sid Snyder, of course, was chief clerk after Si Holcomb. Sid was the assistant and took over, and he ran the thing like clockwork, and you had absolute knowledge of everything that was going on in the place.

As a matter of fact, once in awhile, I said, "Hey, where's this person fit in? Who's representing—who's supporting that person for the job?" Wondering. He had his finger on the pulse all the time. He was an excellent clerk of the House and later secretary of the Senate. Excellent.

So I didn't have to pay attention to all the details. I had the bill work, that was all. Very, very rarely did I have to get involved in the internal operation of the place. That would only be on occasion, or if something was too public, or shouldn't be happening. Passing the word, and we'd fire somebody's fanny, you know. That's all, and it only happened on a couple of occasions. It was usually caused by somebody getting liquored up—somebody tells somebody off.

Ms. Boswell: Was that common?

Mr. Mardesich: No. But as I say, in twelve years, a couple of times, it means nothing. But in the Senate, I never had that happen. Sid moved over to the Senate, too, with us. There's a man who would have the history at his fingertips. He could have anecdotes until you couldn't believe it. As I say, he kept up on it all. He knew all the internal operations. He knew who was where on most issues. He really had his finger on it. The only question I ever had about Sid was that when he became senator, he wasn't mean enough to run it.

Ms. Boswell: Those senators had to be whipped in line a little bit more?

Mr. Mardesich: Once in awhile, but it was not bad.

I was on a number of committees, of course, over the years. It fluctuated, and when I was actually leader in the House, I consolidated some of the committees to cut down on them. For a very

simple reason: as the number of committees expanded, you had to have a chairman for each, and people wanted to be on more committees. Often, you could not have them meeting because of the conflicts. A guy would be on two or three committees, and he'd have to select one to go to. Rather than have that kind of thing going on, I cut down on the number of committees. So I said, "Okay, you'd get two or three of them and that's it." One time I was on seven of them and it's an impossibility to get to them, so you have to pick the one you think is most important for that day.

But I did cut down on the number of committees and said that they should try to restrict it to three. Take your choice, and if we could get you on those three, you'd be on them.

Ms. Boswell: How would you express your choice? What was the means?

Mr. Mardesich: We'd have to submit a request for them to the leadership. Then we would assign the committees primarily according to requests if possible. If not, then we just decided where they'd go.

Ms. Boswell: When you had that request form, did most people want to be on the Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Banking?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, there was an Agriculture Committee, which the farmers all wanted to be on. There were social and health service-type committees which some of the people who had those interests wanted to be on. Most people had an interest of some sort or another and they would choose those committees first, and the others as they dropped in importance in their own opinion. But, in my opinion, of course, the Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Taxation were the most important because they involved all the funds—most of them at least.

Even if a committee wanted to do something in the way of spending of funds, they couldn't. If they wanted to approve something that cost money, they had to submit it to Ways and Means. Otherwise, how could you control the budget? Anyway, that was what we did.

As I say, unfortunately part of the problem I had was trying to keep track. I, at one time, was on seven of the darn things. But it worked pretty well, especially when we cut down. It made it possible to go to the meetings. You had no excuse for not being there. You didn't have to be there. What could anybody do to force you to be? But it didn't give them the off by making the contention that, "I had to go to another meeting that day," and all that. People would often do that. Not show at a meeting and then come to the next one and say, "Well, I wasn't here and I want that matter discussed again." Sometimes it was a device to delay. We cut that stuff out, too.

Ms. Boswell: When you did cut back on the committees, did you primarily consolidate them?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, we just renamed them and consolidated—put two or three items under one name. Just consolidated them. It was that simple.

Ms. Boswell: In the normal business of a committee, what were the committee's biggest contributions in terms of the whole legislative process?

Mr. Mardesich: Education. That's where you went to listen to the reasons why they wanted the funding for the bill. They decided there whether they were meritorious or not, either passing them out to Rules or killing them. That's primarily the function of the committees, to get you educated. The basic research that's done, the staff would do and all that. The members would listen to both sides of the question. Often there weren't two sides; somebody just wanted something and they'd come in for it. Sometimes there'd be real arguments about an issue, and the committee would make the decision to pass it on to Rules.

Ms. Boswell: Would you say that most bills did originate in committee?

Mr. Mardesich: When you say originate in committee, I don't think that we can say "originate." Most bills originate in the hands of attorneys representing a particular industry, in the hands of lobbyists who want a particular issue passed, in the hands of just people who want

something done. Then they are given to the legislators to introduce. The legislator, if he has a real interest, will try to get it into a committee where he feels he may be able to guide it.

Ms. Boswell: So the chairs of committees don't necessarily do much in terms of actually initiating their own legislation?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Not at all. I didn't think that was true. It could be. If people have an interest, they try to initiate something—they get the staff to write it up. We often did, even as a group. We'd discuss something in caucus and decide we wanted to do something, get the staff in and tell them to start drafting it.

We had a bill drafting section, finally, where they actually drafted measures and reviewed them for us to see whether they were correctly done, in terms of whether they would fit into the Code as it exists.

Ms. Boswell: That would be a group of staff people who would do that?

Mr. Mardesich: All staff.

Ms. Boswell: How were the staff selected?

Mr. Mardesich: They were primarily some acquaintance of someone who was there. Especially on their own committees, they would get their own staff. Most committees had at least one. Some had two or three, depending on the size of the committee and the work involved. Appropriations would have a larger staff. Health and Social Services was fairly large. Judiciary was probably two people. One or both of them would be attorneys. Some of the smaller committees just had the one.

Ms. Boswell: Even in the 1950s, were they full-time positions, or were they just for the session? How did that work?

Mr. Mardesich: They were originally just for the session. We didn't even have an Interim Committee at first. Later we formed a joint committee, called the Legislative Council, to listen to important items that came up between the sessions. Then, of course, that later expanded.

When I first went into the House, there were six secretaries in the whole House. Later, there was one for each committee. Each member eventually had their own staff person, and some of them had two.

Ms. Boswell: In your mind, Appropriations was important because of the funding aspects of it?

Mr. Mardesich: There was no doubt about it. In my mind it was the most critical committee. We had people—I think I've mentioned this before—that would vote for every expenditure that came across the floor and would not vote on a tax bill, but would vote for every appropriation, every expenditure. That used to get me. But there were people who did that.

Ms. Boswell: How would you describe your position on the budget? Are you a fiscal conservative?

Mr. Mardesich: I was reasonably conservative. We didn't pass too many new taxes when I was running the committee. It was a battle to stop it, too. People would vote for stuff; they'd want everything.

One time, rather than being the head of the Committee on Ways and Means—we just had other people there who wanted it—but when it came time to pass the budget out, I would review it and get the staff in and go over it. If the committee chairman had appropriated too much money—which he often did—then I would just go back and start cutting it down. We got into sometimes a little bit of a battle between me and the committee chairman. One especially, who was out of Bellingham, old man Edwards, I'd tell him, "You've got to keep that thing down. Here's how much money is available according to the department, so keep it down to that." Well, he'd overspend—automatic. I'd have to go back and tell him, "Cut it down." He'd go back in and he was fifty million dollars over draft, and I'd give him heck, and he'd go back in and cut it down to forty-five million dollars. Old A.E. Edwards. Finally, I'd just write it myself, walk in to the

committee, and say, "Here it is. Anybody have any real good points?" And we'd pass it out to the floor. But he was a tough one to deal with when it came to the budget, because he just didn't do it.

Ms. Boswell: How does Appropriations work? Let's say you were in the leadership of the Appropriations Committee as the session started. How does the budget get going?

Mr. Mardesich: The budget would come out of the governor's office first.

Ms. Boswell: So, that's the first one that comes out?

Mr. Mardesich: The requests from all these departments come in and why they need it. The governor would write a budget, and, ostensibly, he'd have to recommend—if he went over the funds available—the tax to go with it. Those were usually high. And sometimes they would spend and take the position that, "Well, the funds will be there in spite of the assertion by the finance committees," and all that. Let's say there was $1.3 billion available in new money, and he said—on a number of occasions the governor would say to his staff, "According to our analysis, there's going to be $1.5 billion, not $1.3 billion, and so we have $200 million more to spend."

I chose to be more conservative and to not spend it unless we knew we had it. Or, if we spent it, we had to raise the taxes to balance it. As a matter of fact, we ran through the House when I was there, a balanced budget amendment. It had to be balanced before we could pass it.

Ms. Boswell: How did that fare?

Mr. Mardesich: It worked. Oh, yes, it passed, but after big debates. Sometimes it would be a question of how much funding there would be and all that, but we had to get an agreement that matched the budget—here's where the money's coming from. It worked. You didn't see many unbalanced budgets. You don't even see them today. We still have the same law. They stretch it now and then. Sometimes income will far exceed their expectations, as it has recently.

Two or three years ago, they passed a large budget and they passed a big tax increase. The reason was not because they figured—in my opinion, this is—that the taxes were necessary to support the budget, but because the people were passing the initiative to put the lid on the amount of taxes and money that could be raised. So they ran it way up. This is the new tax level. And they ended up in the first year with a $1.215 billion in extra money. That was the fellow who is now governor. Gary Locke was then the head of Appropriations, and he was not the head of Taxation, except he obviously had to be working with them. They did that, and no one's ever told me that, but there's no other possible reason for it. No other possible explanation why they should be so far out of whack—appropriations with revenue. Except that they wanted to have the revenue available, and then the people said, "You've got a six percent increase limit every year."

Now, they're giving tax relief because they cannot exceed the six percent limit on an annual basis unless they have a two-thirds majority. So they still have this surplus, and they gave already, what, $200 or $300 million tax refund, eighteen dollars per home or something? I've been glancing at it only. And they're now proposing a bill for business and occupation tax relief. Another couple of hundred million, because they raised it so high the people said, "You can't spend it except on a graduated increase." It makes them look like heroes—they're cutting taxes.

In my book that's wrong. What they should do is pay off the deficits, because we have $500 billion, I think—this is a guess—I wouldn't be a damned bit surprised though if there was $500 billion in debt in this state right now, or damn close to it.

Ms. Boswell: In the state?

Mr. Mardesich: In the state alone.

Ms. Boswell: I didn't realize we had that big a deficit.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. I would be surprised if there wasn't. Why don't they use half a billion to pay that off?

Ms. Boswell: Why don't they?

Mr. Mardesich: I'm not there or I'd be asking the question, and I'd be seeing that it was done. As a matter of fact, we did it one time when I was there, when there was a little surplus of fifty million we applied against the deficit. First time that had been done in years and years and years. We applied it against the deficit.

Ms. Boswell: Wasn't there a lot of debate, too, over the rainy day fund?

Mr. Mardesich: They tried to set up the rainy day fund, which is not a bad idea because you never know what'll happen.

Ms. Boswell: I think that the state economy, at least in the past, with the resource-based economy, had very good years and very bad years when the taxes were raised and lowered. We had one a few years ago.

Mr. Mardesich: Right. There's no reason they shouldn't have an emergency fund. Who makes the decision as to whether there's an emergency fund? The governor, I assume. Now he should call in the legislative leaders. But there's a tendency for governors to be a little more lenient in their spending, every one of them I've ever seen. Because the people come in there and work them over and over, and departments come in and cry on his desk and all that monkey business. So there's a tendency to increase the budget, whether it's necessary or not. There is that tendency and it's difficult to stop—extremely difficult.

If you have a department, wouldn't it indicate that your department may not be as necessary as you think it should be, unless you got an increase? "Because we have to do this and we have to do that, and we should be doing this and we should be doing that." So, you ask for more money. The more money, the more people you have control over. What happens next? The higher your salary should be: "I've got a staff of 500." That works. And they often do it, I firmly believe, for just those reasons.

Ms. Boswell: With appropriations, was the tendency, if the governor was of the same party, to try to go along with the governor's budget?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, there would be that. There was, although I never let that bother me. We could all make mistakes. I could make mistakes, they could make mistakes. But that never bothered me.

As I'm thinking back, we've very rarely had a conservative governor. Art Langlie was probably the most conservative when I first went down. Dan Evans was not what you'd call a conservative type. He was a good spender. Lowry was the same in Seattle. He was on the county council and all that. He was not, in my opinion, pointed in any direction, up or down. He was more: "I'll go along with the prevailing approach." Although he wanted increases, too. Most of them do. They're trying to be nice to the people who helped them get elected. It's that simple.

If the public school teachers helped you get elected, why you get more money for the public schools, huh? If the public employees helped you get elected, you've got to get more money for the public employees—salary increases. You see today where they make the comment in the paper that there's only been one increase in salaries of four percent in the last four years? That may well be true. Then they're ignoring the fact that most state employees, and I mean the large bulk of them, get automatic increases based on longevity. They don't count that as a wage increase. Every other place I ever saw in private business, that's a wage increase. Not in the government. That's something relatively new, longevity increases. And they choose to ignore it. As it happens, there are steps in the state system. I don't know how the hell that ever happened either. One, two, three, four, five, and six: you start at the bottom when you go on, and every year you get a raise. Pretty soon, you get to the peak, though. And the higher-ups are exempted from that, now.

So, there's sort of a method to the madness, you know. Spend more money, you make more money. Not a good approach in my book.

Ms. Boswell: Was there an attempt during the time that you were there to try to reform this whole state civil service system?

Mr. Mardesich: The civil service system was originally passed by the people, by initiative, not by the Legislature. The Legislature always requested a civil service system, and they never did anything about it. They then went the initiative route to pass it. I don't think the people really gave much thought to the effect, except the propaganda was "longevity keeps experience," rather than "make it all a political mash." There is some political mash to the non-civil service system. But the mash on the other side is once you get a bad one, it's hard to get rid of him. And that's just as prevalent, believe me.

Go ask any administrator down there who they've fired lately. There are three stages—I'm going back a few years—there were three stages of appeal, and pretty soon you'd spend months and months and months fighting over one firing. "Ignore it," was their response. "To heck with it. Get another guy, replace him, and send him over someplace else to work in the lower echelon." That kind of thing. "Put him at a desk over there where he doesn't get in anybody's way." That goes on, simply because of the difficulty of firing under the civil service system.

Ms. Boswell: Was there any attempt by the Legislature to change that at all?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall whether we actually got that deeply into it. We could make a point with every administrator. We made it a point to ask, "How many people have you fired? Do you not have any people you think you should be firing?" and so on and so forth. We'd get the point across, subtly sometimes, and sometimes not so subtly. "Your budget is now going to be cut by—that fellow's salary is $20,000 a year? We're going to cut your budget by $140,000. Now we'll find out if you can take the time to get rid of him." So he gets $100,000 back next time, you know? That we did.

Ms. Boswell: You did do that?

Mr. Mardesich: You bet. There used to be an insurance commissioner—what the heck was his name—he was an old-timer: Sullivan, Billy Sullivan. We called him in, and I don't think he'd ever been asked about a budget. And I simply made a rule that the director had to be there when we were discussing his budget. They'd all bring staff and have staff explain everything. Sullivan didn't know—and I might be exaggerating a little—a damn thing about his budget. It upset me just to have that kind of an approach, and I embarrassed him something fiercely in front of that committee. But he had it coming. "Here you are the head of a department and you don't even know what's in your budget." Doesn't make sense. But he was the first one we really gave a public whipping to. And I cut three million dollars off his budget simply because of that. Three million dollars was just knocked off his budget. He was over there the next day begging—and for a week, he was begging and begging. We replaced about half of it, I guess. He got the message. After that he would come prepared.

To me it was inconceivable that you'd have that kind of a response. Heads of departments, and they don't even know what's in the budget? Who's writing it? Who's controlling it?

Ms. Boswell: Are there a variety of ways that the Legislature can keep tabs on all this?

Mr. Mardesich: They can have the staff look it over and find out. You can make them account for every position, what they're doing, and all that. You can drive them nuts, literally. You can say, "Well, until we have an answer, cut it." Then they get the answers for us.

I had most of the people on the Ways and Means Committee—this all started in the House—but most of the people on those Ways and Means committees, especially in the Senate—they were all close associates of mine. So we knew exactly—well, no one can know exactly what's going on in everything, especially if you're a part-time legislator—but you attempt to. You make it a point, you do this, you look up this, and you get that. Then we'd sit around and chew the fat and decide, "Hey, something's out of whack here." Then we'd call them in and work them over.

Eventually—it wasn't too darn long—they saw it happening, and then they began taking a little more care with what they came to us with. There was a common practice, always, always,

you'd be spending for the two-year budget—at that time it was a two-year budget—and you'd have your regular staff, and you were doing the job. Suddenly they'd wake up and find out, "Man! it's two months to the end of the session, and look, we don't have two twenty-fourths of our budget left or whatever it should be, with the increases and all that. Man, we've got three twenty-fourths left." In the last two months, they'd start spending it everywhere—buy stacks of envelopes. Buy all the paper we need, buy this, buy that, and buy everything. Overtime, everything. They'd just try to get rid of it so that we would not then be in a position to ask, "Well, you have some money left, I assume you don't need as much this time." They'd go all out to blow it. To me, that was atrocious, as well. And I mean very considerable sums—in the millions. The departments would just blow it all in the last couple of months, especially the last month of the session.

Ms. Boswell: How do you stop that kind of practice?

Mr. Mardesich: It's not easy. They would whine, of course, "We buy it in the end of the session, so we see how much money we have, so we have enough for the next session." That excuse: "We always buy at the end of the session." They always buy at the end of the session because they have money left. They don't want to give it back. It was that simple. It happened lots of times, lots of times.

Ms. Boswell: If a department had come to you and said, "We have extra money; here it is back," what would you have done?

Mr. Mardesich: They used to do that, some.

Ms. Boswell: Would you have cut them back?

Mr. Mardesich: No. We'd say, "Okay, fine. Keep up the good work." And we'd give him what he had last time and see if he'd keep up the good work.

It's a tendency—not openly—but it's a tendency to pay them extra for doing a good job. And some of them did. Some of them came back with not horrendous sums, but came back with significant sums of extra money at the end of the biennial year.

Ms. Boswell: Then what happens? Is that just thrown back into the fund?

Mr. Mardesich: It goes back into the General Fund, right.

Ms. Boswell: We were talking earlier about the proliferation of special committees.

Mr. Mardesich: I told you that some of them were simply in existence because people had friends on them and so on.

Ms. Boswell: You were saying that sometimes they had a purpose that was long gone.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. Like the Grays Harbor deal. And I've got to believe there are any number of them like that. The canal from Grays Harbor up to—there are two harbors down there. It's never going to get built, so what's the point? Because there were friends there, that's all. They should eliminate half of old stuff like that. There's no need for them.

Ms. Boswell: Do the committees meet? They have appropriations, so they have money.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, sure. That committee, I think there were three people on it and a staff of two people, studying what? A staff man and a secretary. They'd hold a meeting once every month or two, to talk about what? They would hold a meeting in Walla Walla, when the football games were in Walla Walla. They'd hold a meeting in Seattle, when the football games were in Seattle, and so on. Per diem, travel, see some friends.

I don't know how many there are like that, but I've got to believe there are a lot of them. I was amazed when I found out. At that time there were over 300, almost 350 committees such as that. Impossible to really be such a need. Wonder if anyone has ever done anything further about that?

That committee, I don't recall what the

budget was, it might have been $35,000 or whatever. But there was no need for it. In the final analysis, some were less, some were more. In the final scheme of things, it's insignificant. They should put one guy or two guys in charge of studying that whole problem, and that's all. If you start wasting the whole body's time on stuff like that, you don't spend the time you should on the big issues.

As I say, it was a sixty-day session, and we used to go overtime every two years. There just wasn't the time to fool with a lot of the little stuff. You go down, the first week or two would be the introduction of bills and organization of committees and that sort of thing. A week is gone before you even settle down to studying the measures. It was a six-week, seven-week session—two months. That was the session.

Then we stopped the clock at midnight, we started that. The first time they stopped the clock, it went until about three o'clock in the morning. Within three or four years, it was going three days with the clock stopped. Finally, somebody said that there's going to be a challenge, and then everything we passed after that midnight will be without merit or without any purpose or function. So, we simply started calling special sessions.

Then it was that you had to have one every year rather than every other year. The departments sort of like that because it's tough to ask for a million dollars, but when you come in for $500,000, it doesn't sound so bad. But you do it every year instead of every two years.

Ms. Boswell: Is there any way that today, with the size of the state, that you could have the Legislature meet only every other year?

Mr. Mardesich: It would be difficult. You have the committees meeting now, too, all the time. Damn near every committee meets now, all thirty of them, or however many there are nowadays. They meet once a month.

Ms. Boswell: You mean outside of the session?

Mr. Mardesich: Outside of the session, yes. Sometimes more often. The larger committees meet more often. And it's not a complete waste of time because you do get through a lot of the stuff that does take time—submission of bills, the analysis of bills, all that.

Then when you come to the session, those bills are dropped into the hopper right away and you can start acting on them. All you have to do is give time for the rest of them to take a look at them, then you're off and running.

The committee structure in the interim does have its value, there's no two ways about it. I don't think it's necessary to have as many as we do. I don't think it's necessary for all those committees, except for the large ones, such as Judiciary and Appropriations—those should meet quite often, but I don't think there's any need for all of those small committees to meet every month. The number of bills that go into the committee in the interim might be three, five, ten, and twenty. How long does it take to read twenty bills? It isn't going to take that long to understand them. But the big subject matter, like appropriations, there's no end to it. You could study that darn thing all year and not know what's really in it, unless you get to cross-examine the people every day.

CHAPTER 5

EARLY YEARS IN THE SENATE

Mr. Mardesich: I went over to the Senate in 1963. When you first come over to the Senate you don't have too much to do. Chuck Moriarty out of King County, sat in the back row on the Republican side and I sat in the back row on the Democratic side, almost. I was in the next to the back row. Nevertheless, we got to know each other well. "There must be something we could do in this joint except sit here and vote." It was a different organization than in the House. Up came the subject of highways and we sat down and cross-examined all the highway officials—we looked over the highway budget. Then we went around to every legislator and said, "What's the biggest road problem in your area?" And they would tell us what they thought the big problem was. We were asking them and they were telling us.

They'd tell us and we asked everyone in the place. Then we sat down and we called over the highway department people. The head of Highways at that time was Bill Bugge. We called him and two or three of his major people. Chuck and I sat in a room and cross-examined those guys with all the background information we had dug up. They got so they hated us. They were wondering what the hell we were doing. And so we sat down and we rewrote the whole highway budget to accommodate what were the real concerns of the people in their various districts. We rewrote half of that damn budget and dropped it on the floor. Everybody knew now that all they had to do was look at their districts and the projects were there. Their headaches were taken care of. The things that people had been complaining about were taken care of.

We got that thing through the Senate and then we talked to the House people, but we made it a point, "Now you senators have to go talk to your House members." So we didn't talk to that many House members except the main ones. Then we said, "You people have to talk to your House members about what this project does for you." That thing went sailing through the Legislature.

They had a ceremony in the Senate where they issued, to me and to Chuck, railroad engineers' hats. Bill Bugge then quit as Highways director. He went to work in San Francisco for the state of California.

Ms. Boswell: Why doesn't it always work that way? Doesn't that seem the logical way of putting it all together?

Mr. Mardesich: Damn right it's the logical way, but you don't understand engineers. I think they do a little of that, but they have their own ideas and their own planning and that sort of thing, and it may take twenty years to get it through. Maybe we juggled some money, but we didn't really juggle those major projects—the freeways and all that sort of thing. "Hey, this is more important in this district, this is more important in that district." That's all we did. Bugge quit, not because we were wrong, but he didn't want to go through that anymore. He probably figured, "Hell, these son-of-a-guns are new in the Senate, they're going to be working us over from now on." I think that's why he walked away from it. He just didn't want to go through that anymore.

As I say, we harassed them something fierce. We had them over there every day for meetings—evenings, everything else. We made them come over and explain in detail what their position was, and why, on this budget. We made them go through that road by road.

Ms. Boswell: Was that a department that you felt was not responsive to either legislative or popular concerns?

Mr. Mardesich: I never felt that it was too responsive. The funny thing about it, too, is that even when we did get to cross-examining them,

you'd think that someone would get the point and say, "What are you trying to do? What are you after?" Never. All they did was stick to their position. So we rewrote the whole doggone budget.

Another thing that bothered me about the highway department. We'd pass a new tax—the highway department received road taxes, and gas taxes—and it would raise hundreds of millions. The money would go over there—they ever ask us? Never. That was one of the reasons we did it.

The next thing. We went back through budgets where they had to list the employees that they have, by name even. I don't know if they still have them, but they used to in those days, employee lists, by department: function, pay, the whole business. At the time we started analyzing this, they had over three thousand engineers in the highway department. It just seemed horrendous to me that they would need that many engineers. Then we figured, well, Uncle Sam is putting a lot of money into the highway department, and we've added some money to match, this, that, and the other, so they have to have some flexibility here to figure out and to actually get the job done. Eight years later, it was still three-thousand-some-hundred employees. Nothing had changed, except the amount of money they were spending on roads dropped and the amount they were spending on personnel went up because wages had increased. That convinced me that it was sort of a closed shop and a "take care of your buddies" business. I don't know what it is now, but they had that same number of employees eight years later.

Now, you would think after the amount of federal money that went into the freeways dropped, the amount of the state money would drop proportionally, because the gas tax hadn't been increased that time. It was tough to get taxes passed, even gas taxes. There had been no new gas taxes, wages had gone up in those eight years, maybe twenty, twenty-four percent, who knows? But the amount going into the roads was going down. That convinced me they needed some changing, too, even more.

Ms. Boswell: It's an interesting contrast to what you were saying earlier about Boeing, where if the demand was off, the workforce went down. But in government, it's not quite that easy, I guess.

Mr. Mardesich: No. They don't fire people very often out of the government. They increase it by adopting: "We're going to expand into this, that or the other." Let me tell you, you don't hear government say, "We are going to cut down on this function." All the time I was there, I never heard that approach. It's simply, "We're going to put on a new project, this, that or the other." I still, today, feel that they are probably well overpopulated in the employment field. But I haven't paid that much attention of late.

Ms. Boswell: But even then it was difficult to get rid of people unless you pulled a coup like with the budget issue?

Mr. Mardesich: Right. Then, to counteract us, they started passing the budget—this was the next year they tried this—and said, "For construction: $230 million," or whatever it was. They had four projects and they named this and that and the other, but no dollar amounts, just to avoid us. They kept it in total figures—not project by project.

That's when Chuck and I would sit down. That's why Bugge got out because the next year we called him back in, "We want the budget outlined in detail." He said, "Goodbye," and left. And I still think it should be. The engineers are probably right as to what they're doing. The politicians, however, have the pulse on the public out there and they know what problems need to be solved in their areas just as well as the engineers do.

Highway 2, across to Marysville and Snohomish—how long was it before we got anything but that old bridge that was in such sad shape? That two-way road was a pile-driven, doggone thing that every once in awhile would have a big dip in it. Before they put that other bridge in, there was a great big argument. And I can understand why. By then they were trying to accommodate more areas. When they started putting that thing in there it was an eight-year project. "If we're going to put this bridge in, it's going to take us eight years to do it." Why? You put in a hundred yards of piling and stuff, pour some more there, and then sit on your butts for another year. What's the point? If you're going to

spend the money on a project, if it's a necessary project, do it and get it into use. That's the kind of thing that we didn't like. It was for this area and I had an interest in it. I mean, this isn't making any sense: eight years building a bridge across the flats? So, all I am saying is that engineers are not always right—all 3,000 of them.

Ms. Boswell: It really took an individual initiative like that to say, "Okay, I'm not happy with how this works, so I'm going to challenge it." What other ways were there of challenging that entrenched bureaucracy?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose we could have called the powers-that-be in the highway department over.

We ourselves, when we started out, were not sure what they were doing was right or wrong, so that's why we started calling the people in and asking, "What's the biggest headache in your district, road-wise?" Then we'd look in there and we wouldn't find anything in the budget about it. That's why we decided the heck with this. "We're going to find out what the headaches are and we're going to get those things taken care of." Every legislator in the place, with doggone rare exception, unless they were real close friends with someone in the highway department, agreed with us. That thing went zipping through that place with no effort once we'd talked to everyone, and there were only a handful of votes against it.

They could see the handwriting on the wall. "We've got these couple of young jackasses up there—Mardesich and Moriarity—what are we going to do about them?" I can see the discussions they must have had. We were probably going to do the same thing next time. And we would have.

Ms. Boswell: Were there other departments that were entrenched like that?

Mr. Mardesich: We felt, I did at least, that the Department of Social and Health Services was. It had different names at different times—and they changed it so often that you had nothing to really compare it with. They'd consolidate this into this, and then they'd break it up again into this and that. It was a very difficult thing to keep track of because they changed it so often. There may well have been a method to that madness, I don't know.

Ms. Boswell: Did anybody do with Social and Health Services like you did with the highway department? Sit down and challenge it?

Mr. Mardesich: No. But we used to look at it a little more closely, all right. No one really did a tear-down business on it. Part of the reason it was difficult to do, was because they had so many changes. They'd take this little division out of that department, and how do you check it? That was the problem.

It became a monstrous thing. The Department of Social and Health Services became the biggest part of government. It even is today, although they have tried to break it down a little more now. They're going back the other way. They break it down more so they can better see what it is and control it. I don't think there's any doubt that it's the largest part of the budget by a healthy, very substantial majority. If you don't have a way to analyze it, the boys should wake up and say, "That's the way it's going to be. If the department wants to change it, you don't change it and bring us a budget with all this change in it. You tell us what you want to change and why, and we'll decide whether we're going to change it." That's the way it should run.

Ms. Boswell: Why doesn't it run that way?

Mr. Mardesich: If you were the head of the Department of Social and Health Services, what would you do? Keep them confused. Isn't that right?

Ms. Boswell: Well, yes, maybe.

Mr. Mardesich: The more confused, the less they'll fool around with you. If they can't figure it out at a glance, they'll shake their heads and walk away. And there was a tendency to do that. So, if you were the head, you'd do it that way. And they maybe learned some lessons, themselves. Now they're trying to break it back down so they can control it a little better.

They used to transfer their head personnel

around. Where the hell is he? Have to look up in the directory of names to find him. He's under some other division now.

But there is an area where they could stand some real study right now.

Ms. Boswell: In the late 1960s and particularly the early 1970s, when the economy statewide took a pretty strong downturn, what happened in terms of budgeting for these big agencies that have so much money going into them? Is it the Legislature that has to mandate cuts or how does that work?

Mr. Mardesich: They come in with their request. The governor responds to what he sees. We now have a budget office that does analyzing for the future. They come in and write the budget up and the governor should tell them ahead of time what he wants. If he doesn't, he should; if he doesn't, then, he does it after they do the budget. He should say, "Here's the money we figure we're going to get in. You chop it five percent across the board because that's what the apparent drop in dollars is, or you come in and tell me why it shouldn't be." Of course some areas are more important. He shouldn't worry about that. He should just say, "That's it," and let those boys who run those departments come in with their excuses or their demands or whatever it is they have. That's the way it should run.

Talking about the 1970s, who was governor at that time?

Ms. Boswell: It was Evans, wasn't it?

Mr. Mardesich: He was no dummy. Dan Evans was no dummy, and one that you could trust. At least I never had any problem where he would mislead me. And he'd had some experience with the budget and all that, the writing of it. He sat right across from me and we'd chat across the aisle. He never had any problem balancing those budgets.

He had no great compunction about asking for more taxes, however, either. He brought the budget in and just told them, "That's it. Balance it or else tell me why not."

You talk about how the state had that difficult time. The drop in public revenues was not that great. Why? Because the taxes related to sales tax and people. Sales drop, you get less money in. But the bulk of sales is in, what? Food. People don't stop eating. It's a more gradual fluctuation than would be indicated by employment—up and down, sharply. I never felt that our state had that much of a problem with the budget. It didn't.

Ms. Boswell: Evans had a campaign I was reading about in some of the newspaper clippings that he called "Jobs Now." I think he added more gasoline taxes to try to pay for new jobs in that "Jobs Now" program—retail sales tax to gasoline.

Mr. Mardesich: I think he did raise the tax. He tried the retail sales tax on gas, but didn't get it. But he did increase gas taxes. That was to get more employment. May as well fix the roads was the theory.

Ms. Boswell: You were the one who was called the "father of the bond issue," that you were proposing at the same time to finance the urban arterial program to make jobs.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. If you're going to spend money, why not spend it on something you can use instead of giving to each unemployed person $350 a month? Hire them. Give them $600 a month, and get something done for it.

Even today, when I was up at the library I spotted a fellow when we were driving away from there, two blocks away by then, and here is this guy sitting there brushing his hair. Twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven years old? He can't get a job? There may not be many jobs around—take a look at the jobs in the newspaper. There's a lot of them at six dollars an hour and all that. I'd rather help the family with a few bucks than have them sit on their butts. They're drawing $450, $475 a month nowadays. Anyone can walk in and get it, "I'm out of a job, I need help." Fine, we'll put you to work. Why not? We have a million projects we could spend the money on. Parks, clearing out the forests, forest lands owned by the state—a million things you can do. If you just give it away, it doesn't make sense.

Ms. Boswell: Did you find legislative resistance

even in the late 1960s and early 1970s to that notion of higher taxes?

Mr. Mardesich: There's always legislative resistance to taxes. "I don't want to vote for a tax; people in my area don't want any tax." That was an attitude that was not uncommon. People would just not vote for taxes. They would vote for every appropriation just to make everybody happy who had come to see about money.

Ms. Boswell: What can you do about that? There's not much you can do?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, there is. There is something you can do. It's more difficult here because it affected my district, but even then I did it. You look up and see what's in the budget for him in his area, if in no other area than in roads. Then you just take the pencil and draw it through those jobs. He learns about it and he'd come, "What the heck are you doing? Why couldn't you do this or that?"

"Well, we can't get enough support out of you for the programs that the caucus wants, so we have to do something, don't we?" I'd say.

Ms. Boswell: That's politics!

Mr. Mardesich: You can convince people one way or the other. And believe me, they react when they see language. "Gee, they had that road fixed up and now it's going out of the budget."

I'll say one thing. There were a bunch of good people in that Legislature, and I'm thinking now of more recent times in the Senate. Guys who came over from the House, most of them—the Sandisons, the Walgrens, the rest of them, who understood what you were doing. They would go right along, and you had to recognize their position and all that, but they would stand up and give somebody heck for being recalcitrant about something. Or, they'd take them aside and say, "What the hell are you doing?" And so we had a very smooth Senate organization operating. If nothing else, Chuck Moriarty was still over there on the other side, and we rewrote the budget. Frank Atwood from Bellingham was over on the other side. Jim Matson from Selah was over on the other side, and the give-and-take was there. Let me tell you, if I needed some votes, all I had to do is look over there and catch Frank's eye and raise three fingers.

Ms. Boswell: Put your fingers up? You really would do that, put up three fingers?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. If I needed three votes. He'd stand up, go talk to his boys. The tough ones, as I say, the Atwoods, the Matsons and three or four of those guys, they'd vote anyway. It made no difference to them. They were in good, solid districts. They were good, solid legislators. And they'd vote: bang—right with you, period. Even if it was a bad vote for them. So, people came to recognize that this son-of-a-gun was going to get the votes anyway.

Ms. Boswell: How did you get these Republicans to vote with you? "I've done a lot for you, you do it for me?"

Mr. Mardesich: Very simple. We'd have these meetings—I think I've mentioned them. We held them primarily in the office of the head of the budget committee, Revenue and Taxation—my office was small. During the last part of that time it was Donohue from over in Eastern Washington. He had a large office. Three or four of the Democratic leaders, three or four of the Republican leaders, we'd just sit around in that office and settle it.

"What's your problem? What's your problem? What's wrong with this bill?"

"Okay, we'll change it, by golly you've got a point."

As I say, when it came time, I'd just raise my fingers and they understood, and they'd go along. They had attended those meetings, so that if they wanted something they'd come to me and say, "Hey, Joe Blow in our area is really hurting for this. We'll put it on the calendar." So you get that working relationship. That overcomes any number of sins.

As I say, then you could complain to the boy who was not playing ball with you, and all of a sudden he'd find that line drawn through his problems. If it wasn't just a road problem, he'd find out—it was so easy to find out what bills he's

interested in, what ones is he really taking a personal interest in, whatever the reason might be. And then those bills wouldn't move. They'd stay in the committee. He'd go complain to the committee chairman, and the committee chairman would say, "Well, we'll get around to it." And after awhile he'd say, "Go talk to Augie." He'd find it more difficult to talk to me, because I had a complaint or he wouldn't be in that position. It operated very well.

Ms. Boswell: And it really did work?

Mr. Mardesich: Poof! Like a charm. Like a charm. The Senate passed what was necessary and killed what we wanted to. It was that simple.

Ms. Boswell: Partisanship—Democratic or Republican—was really not an issue?

Mr. Mardesich: We'd get up there and fight like heck on some issues, and we understood what the problem was. They'd give us heck and the rest of it. We'd give them heck. We'd walk out just giving each other heck. The issue was there and we were divided on that issue, so that's life. It worked very well.

Ms. Boswell: But, for example, if there was something that Boeing wanted as a big company, I think you might reasonably expect that the Republicans are going to be more sympathetic than the Democrats. Was that an issue of partisanship or not?

Mr. Mardesich: Not necessarily. Boeing's biggest interest or largest concern, of course, was with taxes and things of that sort, labor, bills that tended to go overboard, and they do sometimes. Have you looked at this morning's *Seattle P-I*, about the waterfront? The longshoremen deal? I didn't read it.

Ms. Boswell: I haven't read it yet, but I did see it, yes. I guess they have the highest wages of any of the unions.

Mr. Mardesich: Even for the non-unionized; they make $65,000 a year. The union is at about $75,000, running up to $130,000. It's like, nowadays, playing Tiddlywinks. It's all done by machinery. Sure, there's still a little danger in it once in awhile, but it's not that difficult.

All I'm saying is that we used to have our disagreements, even with labor. They'd want something and come in. They gave me hell any number of times. But, I'd give them hell back, too. Ask Joe Davis.

Ms. Boswell: I was going to say that you and Joe Davis were not necessarily very good pals, were you?

Mr. Mardesich: No. But I had other labor people who came to me and said, "Give him hell."

Arnie Weinmeister, of the Teamsters, he never put the heat on me. If he felt he wanted something, he'd simply pass the word along, "Arnie would appreciate your support." And if there was no problem with it, I'd support it. If there was a problem, I'd call him up and tell him why. He'd say, "We'll fix it." I never had any problem with him, and I didn't really have that much problem with Joe, except Joe had a tendency of "it's his way or no way." Unfortunately, I was just as bad as Joe.

Ms. Boswell: What can the Legislature most effectively do to prevent an economic downturn or distress? Can they do anything?

Mr. Mardesich: There's not a heck of a lot the Legislature can do. You can reduce taxes, but what's that going to do? The biggest factor in the sales tax is those things that people need. And still maybe even today, one of the logical reasons why that sales tax is still there is for major funding for the state.

Nevertheless, I've always felt, and I always will, that the only thing a state can do, and the Federals do it now and then, is be of assistance to those people who are really in need of assistance. What are you going to do, let people starve? You can't. So you do something about it. But those cases are rare, believe me.

Another thing, I read in the paper recently where some gal with three kids had been on public assistance for twenty years. Now, in twenty

years—I think it said that her husband had died. They gave some examples—some of them died, some divorced, and all this and that. If they were divorced and not collecting money from their ex-husband, why not? Is she supporting the kids herself? Well, they can't find the husband. Well, find him. If he's in this state, throw his ass in the jug, and make sure that he remembers it. That's the answer. You can't let those people starve.

On the other hand, you get these women who have been on public assistance for twenty years; then, even if she had the kids, the kids have to be all grown up now. And I felt that you could put a lot of these people who were mothers to work in child care centers. Take care of the kids and let the women get out and work on jobs now and then. Half-days, two-thirds days, all day, whatever. It would keep those people employed who were taking care of the kids, and it would give the mother a chance to get out of the house, and get her doing something rather than just sitting on her fanny. I never believed in and never will believe in just the straight dole like we have in this state—even today to the tune of $450, $470, or $490 a month or whatever it is—just for walking in and saying, "Hey, I don't have a job and I want the money."

You can walk down any street in Everett and find junk in the streets. Give them a broom and a little push-cart. They can sweep the place up and the rest of it. The city has to be cleaned up, huh? Always does. Parks have to be developed. Drive around, there's all kinds of work you can see that should be done in the parks. But they don't do it.

Some of the people in the park department wouldn't like that because it would be a threat to their jobs. That's crazy. It wouldn't be a threat, it just makes the parks more attractive. Build a new park, build more of them. People need parks and a place to play. Kids need baseball fields all over the place, and they're all concentrated in one area up north of town now. There are a couple where the schools are. They're not spread around enough.

Ms. Boswell: Can things like that happen with those kinds of programs unless an individual with some power pushes them in the Legislature, or do they just kind of dissipate, otherwise?

Mr. Mardesich: Things will keep running as they are running unless somebody does something about it. If you call these problems to their attention, someone will try to do something about it. Most of the time they don't react.

Of course, we used to be in the Legislature two months, every two years. So it was a little different, then.

Ms. Boswell: You really didn't have the time to do much. In terms of the business of legislation, where would you say most of it gets done?

Mr. Mardesich: In committee. Some gets done on the floor.

I know that Bill Gissberg was a great one—when I got to the Senate—he would be concerned with what was coming out. As I said, we used to take turns. He'd read one and I'd read the next one, because you can't keep up with all that stuff. If we didn't like the looks of it or for some reason it struck us wrong, we'd move it down the calendar until we had a chance to look at it, or move it over to the next day. He was one who was inclined to check everything before it went all the way. He got so he'd turn around and roll his eyes, and I'd know, okay, we'll hold this one up.

Ms. Boswell: Is it fair to say—I've heard some people say—that the real business of legislation doesn't even take place in committees or on the floor or in hearings, but rather just with individuals talking in a back room, just the personal contact.

Mr. Mardesich: No question. Especially when I got to the Senate, we used to have those meetings every day over there in one of the large offices. A lot of it got settled in those informal committee meetings. A lot of it—no question.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that's positive? Is that the way it should work, or is it because the system doesn't work as it should? Is that just the best way with our system?

Mr. Mardesich: There's one thing about this method of handling it, you didn't put the time into the public hearings as much, you know. You'd go to a Ways and Means Committee meeting, and it

would last from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. or 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., whatever, when you could have settled it all in the committee, in that special committee in half an hour. "What's coming up that day?" That's what the difference is.

Ms. Boswell: But doesn't that eliminate the public?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I was just going to say, you have to hear the public. Those people who are there—the chairman is there—half the committee or more is always there. They would get the public reaction and pass it on to us. Here's why they want it; here are their arguments. So, we'd say, "Okay, hold it up because we have some questions," or, "Okay, we'll put it on the calendar."

Ms. Boswell: So you would maintain that the public input is still there?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, it was. As I say, we still had the public meetings. They'd come back and report to us on what those meetings were about and what the comments were. Who wanted what and why. They'd come back to us with these reports asking for clarification.

Ms. Boswell: If decisions are made primarily in that way, again, it makes it feel as though there's this network of people and you can't crack that network, unless you're among this small group of elite who really have the say about what's going to happen.

Mr. Mardesich: I'll tell you one thing. More than elite, it was workers—people who took the time and did the work. The guys who know. It doesn't take you long to figure out who knows and who works at it. You'd get them in. You'd talk to some people about what's on tomorrow's calendar, what's on the day after tomorrow's calendar? You think they know anything about it? Dang little, lots of people. So, it's generally the people who worked or who were willing to work, and willing to read that we conferred with.

Ms. Boswell: Would you say that that would be the major characteristic of leadership? Somebody who was willing to work? Is that how leaders would ultimately rise to the top?

Mr. Mardesich: If you don't work, you don't get there. It's that simple, ninety percent of the time. You have to do some work or nobody pays attention. You impress them by what you know. If you've read ninety percent of the stuff that hits that floor, you're standing up speaking for or against, or you catch someone making a comment, you stand up and correct them. Or you ask them questions to indicate, "What did you say? On page three, it says—you know. How do you respond to that, sir?" Well, it's work. And pretty soon when you stand up, people don't argue with you too much. You say, "I move the bill be set over 'til tomorrow's calendar."

"Aye"—everybody, except the "no" vote is the one guy who really wants it or something. So, it is those who read and know what's in the stuff, who soon the people start focusing on. "He doesn't BS. What he says is correct."

There's not just one or two, there are any number of them like that, you know.

Ms. Boswell: Would you say, over all, in assessing the people that you knew in the Legislature, that the public did a good job in electing people?

Mr. Mardesich: Generally speaking, I think so, yes. There were originally a lot of lawyers when I first went down there. Then they passed that initiative where you had to account for, as a legislator, what your income was and where it came from. And a lot of lawyers quit the Legislature because they had clients who didn't want it known that they were going to a lawyer, even. You were supposed to report. That soon got kicked out because the lawyers raised so much hell about it. You have to tell who your clients are? Some guy comes in to see you, his name's in the paper, his wife says, "What are you doing down at the lawyers?" Or a business partner. Who knows? It's not a good deal, so we kicked that back out. I think it was a good move.

As I say, generally speaking, the number of lawyers went way down when that came up. It's picked up a little now, because that's gone, but for awhile there we were losing a hell of a lot of

good lawyers out of the Legislature. Let's face it, they're trained to do this reading and understanding of what's in the law. Half of them know what certain portions of the law are, that's what their specialty is. They'll point out stuff. No one can know it all. But somebody knows something about some portion all the time.

Ms. Boswell: So you think legal training is good training for serving in the Legislature?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't have any doubt, although that's not the only one.

Ms. Boswell: What about the issue of continuity? Do you think that continuity is important? There's always the debate about term limits and no term limits. You mentioned that in any one session, by the time the session itself got organized, you were several weeks into the session. What about over time? If you constantly have new members, then the learning curve is going to be pretty high.

Mr. Mardesich: Right, right, right. That's the argument against term limits. Pretty soon the staff's going to be running it all because they're the only ones who know what's going on. I think that the term limit position that was made—was it six years for the House? Whatever it is, it's too short. I felt it should be twelve for the House and twelve for the Senate. That's six terms in the House and three terms in the Senate. That's the way I still feel it should be.

Why twelve in the Senate, especially? Because one-third of them are leaving every three years and you get a new one-third. Two-thirds are now old hat. In the House it's a slower process.

My answer to those people who say pretty soon the staff will be running the show—I think, with respect to this business of "six years is enough," that's why I think they're wrong. If you have a longer term like a four-year term, if you don't learn it—even in the first two years—if you don't learn the basics of how it's operating and what you have to do to catch hold of the monster, you're never going to learn. There are people, believe me, who just don't. They don't care, they don't do it. There are some of those every session. But, generally speaking, if a guy doesn't figure it out in two to four years, he's never going to figure it out. That's why I don't believe that term limits are that bad.

Second, to answer the continuity question: if there are term limits, twelve years in the Senate, fine, he's got his twelve years in, now he can run against somebody in the House. If he doesn't want to run against someone in the House, that's his problem. Maybe if he runs against somebody in the House that's better because now we'd have competition, even though they're the same party. Why am I better than that guy, and so on. The same with the House. He gets his twelve years in, bang, he can run against a senator if he wants to.

So, it's not so much a limitation of terms, but a change in position in the hierarchy if you really are interested. Put twelve years in the House, twelve years in the Senate, now what are you going to run for? There are half a dozen statewide jobs. If you haven't learned what those people are doing in twenty-four years in the Legislature, you shouldn't be running for those offices. It's an invalid argument. You lose some people and staff will have a tendency to take over. The answer is simple—same is true of staff—twelve years and then goodbye. You can go get another job somewhere in the state. It would give you a broader experience. Go work for the House. Give you again a broader experience. So, I would apply that to the staff, as well.

Ms. Boswell: That's interesting. Wonder how they'd like that?

Mr. Mardesich: It would be a tough time because the staff would come unglued. But I think that's the answer to it. I just believe that, as I said, if you haven't picked it up in two to four years, you don't have it.

Ms. Boswell: And you're saying that generally the public won't be able to pick up on that—that you don't necessarily have it, even though you're still there, looking important?

Mr. Mardesich: Look at it this way. You run in the House every two years. If you can get around enough and talk to enough people, chances are you're going to keep that job even if you're doing

a mediocre job. Especially so if it is as it is today, it can be a full-time job. In the House, what do they make, $28,000 now? Seventy-five, eighty dollars a day during session? And committee meetings? It's a full-time job.

In the old days it was different because you only got $300 a month. You couldn't rely on that as a job. If you're there today, all that time, if you are not able to get reelected, you should be kicked out, somehow. Some people have a tendency to be much more aggressive and much more belligerent. Sometimes they'll get kicked out for other reasons. But it is possible to stay in those positions time after time, after time, by simply working your tail off in terms of campaigning. As I said, it's especially so when you're on salary. Now it's a full-time job—not well paid, but nevertheless full-time. But in comparison to working for certain other jobs in the state where they get $100 and $150.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that on the state level or within the State Legislature, for example, that there should be limits on spending in campaigns? Do you think that is something that's gotten out of hand, too?

Mr. Mardesich: That's a tough one. The trouble with limits, in my opinion, is simply that if you put the limit on, who does that give the advantage to? The incumbent, because of his name familiarity from the past. Plus the fact that while he's down there he gets the exposure. It makes it more difficult to upset the incumbent. That's the bad part. The good part of it is, I suppose, if you put the limit on, oh hell, there won't be continuity in it after the election. So, that's a tough one. I don't know if it came to a vote, how the heck I'd vote on that.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think legislators should be paid more or less? Was it better when they were not getting very much?

Mr. Mardesich: I saw that from day one. They were saying, "Gee, what are we doing here anymore? I've got to go back and go to work." We don't have to hear that argument any more. They don't have to go back and get to work. Lawyers, whatever they did, they had to get back and go to work. Farmers, come the springtime, "Hey, man, we've got to get up to planting. This is the time of year we can't afford to be here."

Once during the 1970s, I don't remember when, we took a twelve-day recess. The House got upset as hell about it. But I said, "You boys take care of your own business. You can stay here and pass bills and we'll take care of it when we get back. If you don't like it, just leave. We don't care." We did that, and I had two people, one from our side, one from the Republican side, come in every morning at ten o'clock when the session ordinarily started and our guy would say, "Mr. President, I move we adjourn for three days." We had the three-day rule—because of the weekends and all that, they had the three-day rule. The Republican would say, "Mr. President, I second the motion." So there were only two guys on the floor. One made the motion and the other seconded it. The President would say, "Those in favor, say aye," and the two guys would say "aye." Then we'd go away for another three days, and then we'd come back three days later. We gave the farmers a chance to plant their crops. That's the only time that's happened.

Ms. Boswell: Then did you add extra days at the end of the session? Did you have a special session?

Mr. Mardesich: We stayed there until we got all the work we wanted to do done. I tell you, in those old days, it was less difficult to get them to go home because of minimal compensation. I didn't give a darn what you did, it was $300 a month. Even when it got to be up to $300, although it was $100 when I started. It was zero when my brother went down in the 1950s. What do you do about that? How do you get by? You can't. So you'd have to be independently wealthy to do it. That's why they started raising it. Although I don't know what it is today, I think $28,000 or there about. I don't believe that it is significant enough or high enough to really attract the people you could. If you raised it, then these people who are going to make a full-time job out of this would have competition from a guy who figured, "Hell, that's not bad. I can get by with sixty." In the overall scheme of things, it's minuscule compared to what

you're spending in the state.

So, it wouldn't bother me to see it raised, because they're going to get some competition, then.

Ms. Boswell: If, let's say, the salary was raised, and you essentially became a full-time legislator, do you think that they should be meeting all year round? Should there be sessions, like Congress where they're recessed for a month or two and then they come back? Would that help state government?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, forget what I once said. The law—when I started—the law books were this wide on the shelf—two feet—and there was no Administrative Code. Within two years the Administrative Code was two feet, also. In time, the law is now about five feet long on the shelf. The Administrative Code is twelve feet long. You go try to read some of that Administrative Code and let me tell you, it's tough to figure out. That's the bad part about having them meet all the time.

And I think I mentioned, too, that we proposed at one time—I made the suggestion and actually got up and made a motion—that the Administrative Code referrals be given to the House and the Senate for review before they become law. I still think it's a good idea. Oh, my! Did those bureaucrats come off of the wall? I figured, hell, this is not the biggest issue in the world today, yet. But look at it. As I say, from zero to twelve feet, the Administrative Code. You can read some of it, and I'll be damned if you'll be able to figure it out. I've seen it. I've read a little of it.

So, I don't know. There are two sides to every one of these debates, you know. I guess I'm saying that if you had a session all the time, would the code expand twice as fast? Or would the laws pass twice as fast, and is it necessary? You can pass twenty million laws. You can always find something to regulate or control. All it takes is for some guy to make some comment and somebody's going to pick up the ball and run and make it an issue. We're going to get a hell of a lot more law on the books.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that there was, in your time, in the 1950s, a really strong difference in terms of political philosophy between the two parties?

Mr. Mardesich: I never found that difference. There was some difference, especially in the social programs and the funds that it cost to run those programs. That's the primary difference. As I said, we had these meetings and we went down the middle. If it was going to cost raising $100 million of new taxes, it didn't happen, period. "Where are we going to cut now, if we're going to spend another hundred, boys? Figure it out, and when you get the answer, come back and tell me." They very, very rarely came back to tell me. You can increase, increase, increase all you want, but is that what you're supposed to do? I don't think so. But you saw it all the time.

As I say, we had some good people on both sides, a lot of them. They did their homework. The Republicans had a vice-chairman. We had it set up so that they had a leader in each committee, too.

No, this is the way it works. We'd call the boys over. We had a lot of cooperation, a lot of it. And I think the Republicans appreciated it and the Democrats appreciated it, because we didn't have all that wasted time. It happened once in awhile where you'd go on the floor with one bill and you would stay there three days arguing that one bill. What were you achieving? People who didn't want it were up yapping simply because they were trying to kill it, and the guys who wanted it were up there yapping trying to knock the other guys down. It would go on, sometimes, for two or three days. What a waste of time.

Ms. Boswell: Did that kind of situation happen because of a lack of leadership on that particular issue, or what caused that?

Mr. Mardesich: They were usually issues that were more party oriented.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that politicians, in those days, were fairly well respected by the populace? You hear, today, people talk about lawyers and politicians and they're sort of looked at as not entirely honest, or not entirely

respectable. How would you say that legislators were regarded in the 1950s?

Mr. Mardesich: I think they probably had a little higher regard than they do now. I don't know why. Maybe it's because if I didn't say that I'd be talking against myself. But I know that people were very respectful. I didn't spend much time, personally, with politics once the session was over. And actually, very little when it came to campaigning. I just didn't campaign much, but people used to want you to come and speak and I used to pass most of those and just go to a couple of the big ones every year.

Ms. Boswell: Is that because you didn't enjoy it or because you didn't think it was necessary?

Mr. Mardesich: It was not that important to me. If I got defeated, *c'est la vie*. If they kept me there, fine, I'll go to work. And it worked well, as I said earlier, with the fishing business. That was a summer occupation and this was the winter vacation.

Ms. Boswell: Did you see it as some sort of community service, or did you just enjoy doing it? How would you gauge your overall interest?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know that I really sat down and analyzed it, in those terms, as a service or whatever. I got so I enjoyed it because it was something I knew. The give-and-take and the maneuvering and all that was of interest to me. It was like catching a fish. You have to know how hard to pull.

But in any event, I didn't really get the view of it as a service. I was trying to do something and do it right. Being of a somewhat conservative nature, that was the approach I followed. I don't think we should spend a fortune, I don't think we ought to tax ourselves to death, and I had a lot of support with that position. Let's face it, I think that's why they kept me there for a long time.

Ms. Boswell: So the whole issue of campaigning, there wasn't really a competitiveness there?

Mr. Mardesich: No. The only time I really campaigned, I got beat. They found out how bad I was.

Ms. Boswell: So you didn't like to give public speeches?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't enjoy it particularly, no. In order to give a public speech, you should prepare for it a little. I never did that. Some people take to it.

Ms. Boswell: You liked the behind-the-scenes business of politics rather than the public business of politics?

Mr. Mardesich: I enjoyed that. Right.

When I went to Olympia, there were two ladies there. By the time I left, there were about twelve, and I think they just came down because I was so good looking.

Ms. Boswell: I'm sure that was the reason.

Mr. Mardesich: The ladies started running, then. I think there were about a dozen of them when I left. Now probably dang near half of the body is ladies.

Ms. Boswell: Did you notice any differences between male and female legislators in terms of the way they pursued legislation?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think so. I, at one time, had the feeling the women were inclined to change their minds more. But maybe it was because when they did, I noticed it. I did it, too. They didn't do it with me too often because if you needed a vote, you needed a vote, and by golly I'd tell them so. Then we'd arrange for them to have some problems about moving their bills. I don't know, as I say, I didn't notice much difference at all.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that women in the Legislature needed to be more aggressive in order to get something done?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think so—especially the first couple of women. There was Emma Abbott Ridgway from Mount Vernon, and then you had

Jeanette Testu from West Seattle. They were very low-key and blinked their eyes and got what they wanted. They were nice gals. So they had no problem getting things through.

Ms. Boswell: Would you call them good legislators?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, sure. They were more concerned, I think, with the social things than the men were. I suppose naturally, I don't know. Anyway, I did notice that.

Ms. Boswell: Later, though, you were not in favor of the equal rights amendment, were you? I remember reading that you were opposed to that amendment.

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall that. Was it some variation of the equal rights amendment?

Ms. Boswell: It seems that when the states were trying to ratify the equal rights amendment, that you were quoted as not being in favor of it. I'd have to go back to the clippings to double-check that.

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall. It could be. I don't know.

Ms. Boswell: But you didn't have any problem with women legislators, generally?

Mr. Mardesich: No. They were down here when I got here. Both of those women, Testu and Ridgway, they were nice gals. Matter of fact, the second session I was there, they sat one on either side of me. I felt I was encircled.

Ms. Boswell: You ran for the Senate in 1962. What caused you to make that switch? Why did you decide to do that?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall exactly what the heck caused me to do it except the discussions that I had with a lot of my politically-oriented friends who probably didn't like the guy who was there. I don't recall any other reason for it.

There would be a reason that would have interested me, and that was the fact that you had to run only every four years instead of every two years. I think that's probably why my friends were urging me to go, because I was in the fishing business and not around much most of the time during the campaigning. It used to frustrate them and they'd call me up—after Alaska we'd be down here, and that would be during the time that you were running—they'd call me on the radio and say, "Hey, you've got to get in here, we have a lot of stuff to set up."

I'd say, "Well, just a few more days and the fishing season will start dropping off, and I'll come in." Too often the run would continue and I'd stay there and fish. They were always giving me heck about that. So, that could be one of the reasons they were jogging to get me to go for the four-year term.

Ms. Boswell: When you say "they," who was part of the group that urged you to run?

Mr. Mardesich: John Salter. Archie Baker, who was a lawyer in town here, was also very close to politics and involved with someone in a race most of the time. I used his office when I got out of law school, part of his office, and that's how he got involved. They were the primary ones that were pushing me.

Ms. Boswell: Did they run the campaign?

Mr. Mardesich: Archie did some things. Salter ran the campaign—he would talk to certain people to go do things. They were people that he knew and who helped Scoop and they respected him. He'd ask them to do things and they'd do the work, but he did the prompting. He was a good prompter.

Ms. Boswell: Was the Senate campaign any different than a House campaign? Was it more intense or a more difficult run?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think it was too much different. It was the same area, essentially. I'd been in the House twelve years, so it was no great problem in terms of familiarity with the district. I know they made me get out—I never had gone door-to-door before—they made me get out that

time and do some doorbelling over in Riverside. Then they gave me heck after I did it because I'd talk to someone at the door. I was supposed to go down a few blocks and hit all the doors. I'd knock on the doors and the people would recognize the name and they'd start chatting and I ended up fifteen or twenty minutes on each porch.

They said, "Just hand them the literature, and say 'I appreciate your support,'" and I ended up in discussions half of the time. They'd sit there and shake their heads. So they didn't really get on my back about doing it very often.

Ms. Boswell: Did you like that? Do you like that person-to-person contact?

Mr. Mardesich: I enjoyed that. You learned something. You would find out what they were thinking about. I was lucky—I never had anyone give me heck.

Ms. Boswell: You didn't have anybody say, "I didn't like the way you voted?"

Mr. Mardesich: No. I did run into one fellow and he had a sign up for my opponent. I went up to the door anyway and introduced myself, and I said, "That's the man who's running against me that you have the sign out there for, but I thought I'd stop by." He said, "That's my wife's. Put one right there next to it." So, I put my sign right next to his sign. I forgot who it was, but they had both of our signs up in their front yard.

Ms. Boswell: That's great. A good story.

Mr. Mardesich: And then we did do one thing. We worked Rucker Street, which is about two blocks north of here—the business district. We worked that street, not I, myself, but others did—the sign people. We had Rucker covered from Twenty-fifth to Twenty-sixth all the way out. About every house had a sign up. You couldn't help, if you drove down Rucker, but notice it—all the way and on both sides of the street, most houses.

Ms. Boswell: And Rucker is a thoroughfare that most people, at one point or another, in Everett will take?

Mr. Mardesich: Old 99 used to come right in on Rucker. And so they loaded that up with signs, and it was impressive. It was not just two, three on a block, it was ten houses on the block, or twelve, or whatever—out of ten we'd have eight or nine of them. Some blocks had them all, so it was impressive. I think it was a good idea. I've never seen anyone do it since, but I think it was effective.

Ms. Boswell: When you do a volunteer organization for a campaign like that, in a town the size of Everett, how many people do you need? Do you remember? What kind of an organization did you put together?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't get that closely involved. We had a lot of people working— hundreds. A lot of them volunteering—stuffing envelopes and putting signs up. Even going door-to-door with literature.

Ms. Boswell: Running a campaign like that, how do you get campaign donations? Do you get most of it from the Democratic Party or do you get it from individuals?

Mr. Mardesich: Mostly from individuals in those days. I got very little from the party. Very, very little. I suppose they figured he's got his own or something.

Archie and John, no matter who they'd see, they'd say, "Come on in." And a lot of people would just donate. We raised substantial sums of money, especially during the time we ran for the Senate and all that. We didn't need to hit the party for anything.

Ms. Boswell: When you say a substantial sum, I know there's always talk now about how much candidates raise and who they raise it from, but back, say, in the 1960s when you ran for the Senate, can you remember what the exact amounts were?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall. I don't recall what it was. I guess $25,000 or $30,000, which was a

substantial sum at that time, too.

There was one time Archie Baker—people would come by his office and drop money off—one time he just put it in a box in the office. At one time we had $9,000, or $10,000 in cash in the box. Then we decided to open a bank account.

Ms. Boswell: What about organizations in Everett? Was there a strong labor interest?

Mr. Mardesich: There was a strong labor group in Everett, and I, essentially, had them with me although we had no close association. They got mad at me a couple of times during the years because I didn't vote the way they wanted. If it's not right, it's not right, I don't care whether they want it or not. We'd get into some fights once in awhile.

In the last campaign I was involved in, the people who got after me were the public employees, primarily because one of the great items in the budget was the pension fund. There was a tendency not to finance it on a continuing basis, but rather to say, "Well, we've got so much to appropriate to pensions this year," and meanwhile the obligation is growing massively. By the time I started toward solving that problem—that must have been six years or eight years before I got defeated—I started fooling with it and man; they came out of the walls. The unions, primarily the public employees and the firemen and policemen, but the firemen especially, did a lot of work.

I said, "Well, their pensions—the firemen and the policemen—were far worse than the regular state pensions because they had higher pensions. They had earlier retirement, twenty-five years instead of thirty, and higher wages generally." Their unfunded liability was horrendous. I could see that the state would be facing a problem unless the situation was corrected enough to meet the obligation. And who's going to pay for it—our kids? The kids in the future.

And eventually, I think, had we not solved the problem, it could well have led to the disintegration of the system. Because if you don't have adequate funding, what do you do? The state goes bankrupt? How do you handle it? Triple the taxes? You'd have a revolution. There was a problem, and we were heading for the problem.

We eventually solved it. It took me four or five years to get that bill through for revamping the system. We first did the public employees, not because they were the worst, but because they had so many people that it was a much larger figure. Then I went to work on the firemen and policemen. That's when they came out with their attacks on me. I took the position that we ought to start talking about actually what this means, talking about their wages and how they compare and what's the view of the taxpayers. I got all kinds of advice, saying, "Lay off of that, lay off of that." In retrospect, I'm not sorry I did it because it is a problem for those systems, even today. And I think that would have awakened the people.

They came out against me—the public employees came out against me. They organized a campaign, and they came here to the City of Everett, the Thirty-eighth District, with twenty-five busloads of people to work against me. To go knocking door to door the last week of the campaign against me. And they only beat me by a couple of thousand votes.

Nevertheless, they really went all out, and that's why I said, "We ought to just go head-to-head with them. Let the people know what it's costing them. Let them know what they're paying these people." What do you think the firemen and policemen receive today in terms of comparison with other public employees? Way higher.

Ms. Boswell: I didn't know that.

Mr. Mardesich: And the pension costs on a per-person basis are exorbitant. How about this—you get a fireman, and usually the people that get into that system are somehow related or friends of people who are there. If you don't believe it, just check. They put their kids, cousins, and friends into the system when they're say, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four years old. Say even twenty-five. You have twenty-five years of work before full retirement. At age fifty you're on full retirement, which is three-quarters of their last pay rate. So if they were getting $40,000 then, they'd have $30,000 retirement, and young enough to go to work anywhere else. And a lot of them did have two jobs. Especially on the fire department.

They'd work twelve on or twenty-four on sometimes, they'd work three, four days a week, that's all. If they were on the weekend, they all rotated. And a heck of a lot of them had other jobs, so they were on not only that, but when you start Social Security and everything else. But, I felt it was just unfair, that's all.

Had I to do it over again, I wouldn't have listened to those people who were advising me, I'd have gone ahead and put it all on the table where it was highly visible. But, that's the way it was.

Ms. Boswell: When you got to the Senate, you'd been around the Legislature for twelve years, so it wasn't like it was something brand new, but on the other hand, how was it different? Were there any ways that it really differed from your experience in the House?

Mr. Mardesich: There was a much more closely-knit feeling than in the House. Of course the size of the body—I'll round off figures: fifty members in the Senate and one hundred in the House. Fifty members in the Senate, if you've got twenty-six, you have the majority. Out of a majority of, say, twenty-six or twenty-seven, which was very close most of the time, you've got twelve or thirteen who run the place. Take a majority by convincing—if you could get that spot—by convincing about a dozen people who would do the talking, the rest would generally go along. And you can always pick up some from the other side, too.

You could work with both sides, Democrat and Republican. I had no problem working with Republicans. There were one or two there who would come to many meetings to see what their objections were, and what their position was on a number of things. We had very few floor fights. It was all settled before we ever got to the floor.

Ms. Boswell: So is it safe to say that there was more "behind closed doors" stuff in the Senate than in the House?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, no question about it. We just sat down and talked it over. We accomplished two things: number one, you didn't sit on the floor all day, and number two, you knew what was going to happen ninety-five percent of the time, unless someone got up and started to debate this, that, and the other. After I got to be majority leader, I just said, as soon as somebody would start a fight, I'd set the bill down to the end of the calendar, "until you two get together and straighten this up," when there were two people arguing. If they couldn't, I'd set it over for another day, and then I'd start looking into what the heck's wrong with it.

I had some very good people who were friends of mine and helped organize the whole thing, and they were powers in their own right: Sandison, Walgren, any number of them. Atwood on the other side. But it was for me to decide. Dewey Donohue from the East Side. We had about five or six who would meet darn near every day. Sometimes if we had a lot of bills on the calendar, and we had calendar enough left for the next day, they'd come over anyway simply because they got into the habit of it. We'd sit around and discuss the state of affairs—relaxed.

Ms. Boswell: Relaxed with some libations?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. It was a different attitude in that respect. Fewer people, more control. Fewer and fewer of those big floor fights. We'd often get into those in the House, and once in awhile it would happen in the Senate. It was a good way to hear all the sides of the arguments, too.

Ms. Boswell: I've heard people say who were in both, that it wasn't as much fun in the Senate as in the House. Would you agree with that or not?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know. They say now it's not nearly as much fun as it was then. There aren't too many who were there then that are still there now. The lobbyists, some of them were around then, and they say it's not like it used to be. And I'd even have the lobbyists come in and tell their side of the story.

That it wasn't as much fun? I suppose that the House was probably a little more liberal. Everybody laughs at the jokes and all that, more than in the Senate. In that respect, I think they had a few more laughs on the floor than we did in the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: I think they might have meant that people took it a little bit more seriously, too.

Mr. Mardesich: In the old days, too, a senator would be a senator, sometimes, for years. The House had much more turnover than the Senate. Some of the senators were there for fifteen or twenty years, a number of them, and so it was a much more stable and older group as well. You wouldn't get much of that activity. In that respect—and I suspect that was part of it—the age of the group, generally speaking, would be less inclined to be so playful.

Ms. Boswell: Could you say—and I know this is an over-simplification—that in the Senate "the cream rises to the top?" Did the Senate have the better members?

Mr. Mardesich: If that were so I would never have been leader, depend on it. I think that generally the people who speak out and who learn what's going on and are reasonably forceful, that they do come up. It's a natural thing. I don't care what you do or where you go. People who are activists seem to get there faster. That's politics.

Ms. Boswell: You were somebody who had a position of leadership in the House. When you got to the Senate, did you lose all your seniority? Everything starts over?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. Right from scratch again. That's a natural.

Ms. Boswell: But that wasn't a deterrent to you, when you decided to move over?

Mr. Mardesich: No. The four-year stuff was the appealing part to me—running every four years instead of every two.

You could rise to the top if you wanted. I think that one reason I became leader of the Senate was the fact that—and I don't say this with any disrespect—Bob Greive was the leader, and he often gave people positions and what they wanted simply to stay on as leader. Bill Gissberg—we urged him any number of times, and Sandison to run for the leadership, and they didn't want to do it. Gissberg ran once, had the votes counted, and had just a one-vote margin. Somebody skipped on him. They were secret ballots when it came to that.

Ms. Boswell: I heard a story about that, that somebody marked their ballot "B-G" and because it was Bill Gissberg or Bob Greive, it had to be spelled out, so they didn't have a vote.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. Somebody probably said, "I voted for you."

Ms. Boswell: When you came to the Senate, Bob Greive was very well established as the floor leader, the majority leader at that time.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, he was.

Ms. Boswell: Did you get along pretty well in the early years, the early 1960s when you first came?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't have that much to do with him. When I came over there, Gissberg lived right out here and we were friends from way back. Sandison had been in the House. Four, five, six of them had come from the House and I knew them very well from having been in the House. So it wasn't as though I was walking into the body not knowing anybody. I knew them.

Gissberg ran for leader that one time and then the next time a number of us tried to talk him into going again and he just wouldn't do it. Then he turned the tables on me and nominated me. And so that's how I became leader in the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: When you came into the Senate, you came in right at the height of the redistricting fight, didn't you? You started in 1963 and that was a big year. Tell me about your impressions of that redistricting.

Mr. Mardesich: There was no doubt in my mind that—and any number of us had the same opinion—it was obvious—that Greive was taking care of the people who supported him in the redistricting fight. He wanted to change something up here that affected Gissberg, and that was one of the things that got me into the redistricting battle. So we kind of ran a few things right over

Greive's head, and took some people away from him. We'd play his game for awhile. "What do you want done to your district?" we'd ask. So we took some of the people who were supportive of him away from him, just by doing it that way. We used his own tactics to beat him.

Ms. Boswell: He maintains that he really worked hard to accommodate as many people as possible.

Mr. Mardesich: He thinks he did and I don't doubt that he did, secondary to his initial objective to take care of the people who were supportive of him. And he would work hard. He worked endlessly on the problem. He had big wall charts covered with redrawn lines. Ever look at some of those districts that were drawn?

Ms. Boswell: Instead of a rectangle, it would be a thousand different little boundaries.

Mr. Mardesich: Everywhere. Oh, yes, it was: "That's a Democratic street, so I'll pick up that street." I mean it was ridiculous. There was a lot of that.

But anyway, having looked at this operation, we did some of what he did to get some of his people away from him. And we did, and I think just perhaps because they could see the handwriting on the wall, too, that the Sandisons, the Gissbergs, the Mardesichs, the Walgrens—they were starting to buck and they could see that the end was in sight.

Outside of that, I'd say we probably tried to take care of our people, no question.

Ms. Boswell: What about the Republican side, the Republican plan? Slade Gorton?

Mr. Mardesich: They came to fight for what they wanted. But, of course, if you had the majority, you did what you wanted. You take care of your own people first.

Ms. Boswell: Just as long as the majority sticks together, though?

Mr. Mardesich: And there's a place where they can fall apart, on redistricting type stuff. Everyone watches for his own well being.

Ms. Boswell: Redistricting, however, is an issue that in most cases is only important to the legislators, themselves. It's not an issue that the public cares much about, is it?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Why would they, unless they have a real interest in politics and say, "They're trying to take him away from our district or us out of his district," or that sort of thing. And there were people who came down and put in their two-bits worth, even on that.

Ms. Boswell: The Legislature was mandated, at that point, that you had to do redistricting or no bills would be passed into law, right?

Mr. Mardesich: They sent something to a commission to handle. Somebody did it.

Ms. Boswell: Although it took a while.

Mr. Mardesich: It took a while, there's no two ways about that.

One of the things this has made me think of, is how it came to pass. They demanded public voting in committees. Remember, it used to be secret ballot: write it on a piece of paper and hand it into the chairman or the clerk.

Ms. Boswell: Was that in caucus, or was that in something else?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, no, it could be in caucus if it came to a point on who you were electing to the caucus positions. The caucuses were very open most of the time. By open, I mean among the members. Seldom was there ballot voting.

Ms. Boswell: I thought caucuses were pretty secretive, generally?

Mr. Mardesich: They were secretive. No one was allowed in, and we voted whatever way we wanted. We didn't have to keep any records or a darn thing. Somebody demanded a roll call, we'd have a roll call. Or a ballot, we'd have a ballot.

I've always felt that going public in

committees, and especially in Rules, with eliminating the little slips—"yes" and "no"—was a bad thing for the public. Because a lot of legislation is supported by smaller groups, individuals and so on, and not necessarily to the public good, although it may sound good. If it sounds good, that's half the battle. People can get up and preach on it and all the rest of the merits. But that, in my opinion, took away the ability of the legislator to vote "no" on many things because he got a feeling that he was to be somehow fighting with his own district or the people in his district who were asking for this thing. If the meeting was public, they would vote to get it out on the floor, even if it was a bad bill, instead of voting to kill it. I still think that way. I think it was a bad move to make voting in Rules public.

It's difficult, now, to kill anything. It used to be difficult, originally, to pass anything. I mean it. If you passed 150 or 200 bills in a session that was it and that was tremendous. Now they pass double that, I'm sure. And part of the reason, as I say, is just that. Something comes out: "Joe Blow wants it, so I've got to go with it." Better it doesn't get out than having to put the boys through that.

And I think this is especially so on Rules. If Rules has the ability—let alone the committee chairman who should have it as well—but if Rules had the ability to stop a bill by secret vote, that would put a damper on it. People could come in and listen to the debate and then leave during the vote. You open the whole thing up, and the room would sometimes be packed with people. It puts the legislators on the spot. They see Joe Blow up there from their district who wants this thing and he's standing there watching this. If there was a secret ballot, number one, you couldn't tell, and number two, you don't have to hide from anybody—he or she is not standing there eyeballing you.

Ms. Boswell: You think that the secrecy really expands the equity?

Mr. Mardesich: I think it has its advantages. It has its disadvantages as well, obviously. I think it has a tendency to kill bad legislation. Very, very often legislation that's good, that has a good purpose, and it's not trivial—how often is it killed? There are so many things now that are trivial, that people put in just so they can say, "I got this," or "I introduced this for you." Any number of items.

Ms. Boswell: What role did the governor take in all this? Rosellini was in for a number of years, both when you were in the House and then in the Senate. How active was he?

Mr. Mardesich: He got things through that he wanted. No question about that. Even when he was in the Senate, he used to be a real activist in working the system. I started under Art Langlie. And I didn't have too much to do with him except for a few occasions. But Al Rosellini, he would come upstairs, even on the floor and mix with the members. If there was something that he wanted and it wasn't moving, you'd get an invitation down to the office.

Ms. Boswell: So a governor with some experience on the floor, with some experience in the Legislature, really does better?

Mr. Mardesich: I think so. No question about it. He knows how it works. Dan Evans, the same thing. Those people who know the floor have an easier time getting what they want. No question about it.

I was still in the House, and I hadn't been there too long. Al Rosellini was dependent on the will of the Senate. He passed a bill over there, out of the Senate, at the insistence of some friend or some group, I don't know. I didn't pay that much attention. He comes over to see me and says, "Kill that darn thing. I don't know how it slipped through. Man alive, this is a rotten bill."

"Okay, I'll take a look at it. Okay," I said, "I'll kill it."

The people then came to see me, "Why wasn't the bill passed?"

"Al didn't want it," I said.

"What do you mean, he doesn't want it? He's the guy that introduced it and spoke for it on the floor." He passed it on the floor and he comes over and lobbies to kill it. So I learned lesson number one. That was when I was new in the House. I needled him about that, too, plenty of times.

Ms. Boswell: Overall, you two got along pretty well, though?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. But I just said, "Once is all it takes, Al."

Ms. Boswell: He got you that time.

Mr. Mardesich: He got me that first time, no question about that.

Ms. Boswell: Was he, generally, pretty trustworthy? If you wanted his backing, you could be pretty sure he'd give it?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. That was the only time that he ever pulled a quickie on me. Had me over there to kill it after he'd worked a deal through the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: I think, then, when you were in the Senate, Evans came in. Was there a lot of difference? Tell me about their difference in style.

Mr. Mardesich: Sure. Evans was not friendly. He's much, in my opinion, colder, a more reserved character than Al. Al was, "Hi, sit down, good to see you. Yak, yak." Evans was much more reserved, much more conservative than Al was. But he was a smart cookie. I never had any problems with Evans, either, on his word and all that. He always did what he said.

On a couple of occasions Evans wanted something. Some of my people wanted something that was being held up, and he was down there, and we were afraid he was going to veto it. He called me if he wanted this and that. I said, "Well, we've got a couple of problems that we've got to get straightened out. My boys wanted a bill signed, and the story's out you're going to kill it. Maybe we can settle this between us." So we settled it between us. I never had him go back on his word.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of getting bipartisan support, how would you rate Evans?

Mr. Mardesich: Not too bad. He'd get the members all down there and talk to them. He wasn't too bad at that.

Ms. Boswell: What about Rosellini?

Mr. Mardesich: Rosellini didn't need it so much because he had a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate, so he didn't worry too much about it.

Ms. Boswell: You still had a fairly large Democratic majority in both houses when Evans came in. Is there an inclination to try and work with the governor, or is there more of an inclination to say, "Too bad. Stick it to him."

Mr. Mardesich: I think that there's an inclination to work with him for a lot of reasons. A legislator has an interest in some bills, particular bills, and he's working to get them through. And he's got to get them signed by the governor. So, if the governor calls him up, he's got to be cooperative. If he wants something, he should be cooperative because he may have to ask the governor, "Hey, that's a heck of a good bill, I wish you'd sign it." Tit for tat. There are some things you just can't swallow. You've got to kill those, but nevertheless, there's a certain amount of trade-off that's natural.

Ms. Boswell: Were there any major issues you recall, especially when Evans was in office, that you came to loggerheads over?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall any, offhand. We were not always in agreement, but I don't recall any major disagreements.

Ms. Boswell: I've noticed in the record I have of all the bills—I guess it was the 1965 session—that there are several bills that you had cosponsored that he did veto. One was on allocations for highway construction and another one was disability benefits for industrial insurance. Were these big deals or not?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall exactly what they were. Allocations for highways may well have been my changing money around for particular areas in the budget contrary to what the Highway Department wanted. And he would listen to the Highway Department first, because he would have to work with them all the time.

Ms. Boswell: Did you know before a bill came out whether the governor would veto it or not? Did you, in those instances, just go ahead and submit it anyway? Or was there enough horse-trading that you could usually get him to go along?

Mr. Mardesich: There were some that shouldn't have been, and often we'd just let it go. Let him throw it in. You can throw in any bill you want.

There are some junk bills thrown in, no two ways about it. Most of it we just ignored, but some of it does get people pushing and lining up votes and all of that. Once in awhile you have to draw the line.

Another thing is putting names on bills. I didn't put my name on many bills, at first. Very, very few. But as you gain authority, people would come to you and beg you. I'd often put my name on a bill just because of who was asking. But there's one thing I did do before that stuff came out: I did a lot of reading.

Ms. Boswell: I was just curious, though, whether you knew from the beginning that bills, even if they were good bills, weren't going to get through? Could you pretty much tell, or were there certain ones that if you really fought, you could get them?

Mr. Mardesich: We did the amendments to the pension system—that's one you knew wasn't going to pass. But it started a fight that lasted five years, and it eventually passed.

I'll never forget. Bob Bailey used to be the senator from down on the coast, Aberdeen-Hoquiam area. When we finally got down to passing the pension reform measures, and I was speaking for the measure, explaining the details, and he stands up and says, "Augie, are you sure this is going to do what you say it is?" Because it was putting a lot of us on the spot.

I said, "Everything I've said is in those bills, and that's the only thing I've said. What I told you is correct."

"Okay," he says, "I'll vote for it." I think that's what helped pass the darn thing that time. Once we did it in the Senate, the House was on the spot.

Ms. Boswell: Obviously, people in leadership positions have clout. But are there certain people that when and if they spoke up, people would listen and say, "Well, maybe this is okay."

Mr. Mardesich: Bob Bailey was one of those who people felt was on the level. If he was concerned about something, they felt there was a real concern.

Ms. Boswell: And was Augie one of those?

Mr. Mardesich: Who, me? People never knew. I didn't say, most of the time, where I stood on anything. You are not aware of that? Really. I never did. As little as possible did I indicate where I was on the subject matter, until it came down to the vote.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about the strategy behind that.

Mr. Mardesich: The strategy? Why should I? Most of the time when people come to you with "get on this bill, get on this bill," I said I got on a lot of them because they simply wanted Augie on.

Most of the time, you don't know what's in those bills, and why should you go on it, number one? Number two, why should you worry about it? There's 3,500, 4,000 bills introduced every session. Why should you even worry about it until it gets part way through that system? Otherwise, I used to read up into the wee hours very often. If you should try to read them all, it would drive you up a tree. So, you wait until they work their way through the system. Now you can cut it down to about 600 or 800 bills instead of 3,500 or 4,000. Now you're getting a more logical number to look at.

As they come down, there are fewer and fewer. I don't know what they're passing now, but even when I was there it got up around the 300, 350 mark. That's a heck of a lot of bills.

Some bills are routine stuff. Quite a few are. Like when they rework the codes to eliminate a lot of the stuff that's ancient and so on. Out of those bills, there are still 350, there are probably seventy-five or a hundred that are of little consequence. It's just the guys who want them really struggling for them and all that. They mean something to them, personally. But the bills that really mean something, I think you could cut down to 200 or so. Now you can read that number, but

even then you get swamped.

Ms. Boswell: It seemed like there were some patterns in the legislation that I saw that you were involved with, especially in the mid-1960s. There were a lot of bills dealing with procedures for state contracting with public hospitals, with counties and cities. There also seemed to be a lot of bills having to do with bonding and insurance benefits. We talked about pensions, but were those areas that really interested you, or were those initiatives that were being taken at that particular time?

Mr. Mardesich: They were generally areas where people had expressed concerns that somebody had. "Okay, get it drafted." I didn't draft the bills. There was enough to do without drafting bills.

At first, there was not even a drafting section. We created a drafting section so that people could get bills drafted. That may have been a mistake, because there were more bills introduced then. But the alternative was, who drafted them? People wanted something, some group—somebody wanted something—they'd hire a good attorney who would draft the bill to give them what they wanted, specifically, without too much concern about how it affected anybody else or the state. If you're hiring a man to draft it, he's going to draft it the way you want it. That's one of the reasons we created this drafting section.

That doesn't mean that people who were hired to do the job still didn't do a lot of bills. Those are the ones that you have to read more about, although I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the people who wanted stuff would drop down to the drafting section and see if they could influence what was coming out. If they had a problem, they'd go in there and talk about it, and try to get it incorporated in the bill. A lot of that went on.

But I don't care who drafts it—the state's own drafting crew, in the House or the Senate, or the people who want it—somebody ought to be reading it. We'd be on the floor and I'd read most of these bills, you know, and people got so used to me standing up to correct things, even English and spelling, or this and that. It was simple—I'd just stand up and substitute this English, this language, sit down, bang-o! That's the only comment I'd make.

And I did it so often. I'd stand up and they'd just go, "What?" So I thought, "Well, you boys are getting a little careless," so I placed an amendment in the bill that revised the effect, or at least changed it 180 degrees from the bill's original intention. I stood up and nobody said a word, they just didn't say a word. "Aye." Then I pointed out to the boys what I had done, and then I moved we reconsider the vote. It taught them a lesson. They got so used to me correcting just their grammar, because there was a lot of sloppy drafting.

Some of it may have been sloppy on purpose. There were things that I read that I could not figure out. You couldn't understand the paragraph. What the hell is the bill doing? What's the purpose of it? And you'd get other people to check and they'd sit there and shake their heads. How did it ever get to be a bill unless there was some motive? There must have been something in there that we weren't seeing. So we'd just strike the whole doggone section and we'll see who comes out of the woods. We'd just strike the section, renumber the rest of the sections, and bang-o! And if nothing happened, then we were right. If somebody came out of the woods and screamed, then we'd find out what it was all about. We did that a lot.

Ms. Boswell: Did people try to pull stuff off? Can you remember any examples of them trying to sneak something through that was pretty offensive or dishonest?

Mr. Mardesich: Most of the time, we'd get that kind of stuff in budget work. But, no, there was stuff. I don't recall right off-hand, but there was stuff that was shady, I'm sure.

Ms. Boswell: Did you see that issue more in the Senate than in the House, or did the Senate consider bills more carefully?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know if I was watching as much for that in the House as I was in the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: I'm not familiar with when the bill drafting section was started. Do you remember approximately?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know. When I first went down there, the House had a total of six secretaries. None were there just to draft bills. But I've got to believe it was in the late 1950s or early 1960s, that we actually started having a full-time staff draft bills.

Ms. Boswell: Before that, when people wanted bills drafted, who paid for that? Who actually did the drafting? A lawyer?

Mr. Mardesich: We had a few lawyers on staff, too. They would work, the lawyers, on drafting key legislation. And there was a few committee staff, the Ways and Means, Judiciary— they had a lawyer or two on the staff. They put those people to work drafting stuff, too. It was not that there was no staff. Rather than having them take the time to do that, when they should be reviewing bills and getting ready for committee action, that's when we created that drafting staff.

Ms. Boswell: Were bill drafters expected to be totally nonpartisan? Could either side use them to draft a bill?

Mr. Mardesich: We all used them. I wouldn't say that you were expected to be nonpartisan, but I think that they figured out that they'd better be because of repercussions. You don't like it, you're out!

Have you ever talked to Sid Snyder? He's the one who would really know this stuff. And Si Holcomb was the clerk of the House when I first went there, and then he passed away. Sid Snyder was his assistant, and then became clerk. Of course when we went over to the Senate, we hired him out of the House into the Senate, and he became Secretary of the Senate. He was a darn good one. Kept good track of everything.

Ms. Boswell: What are the duties of the Secretary of the Senate? What do they have to do?

Mr. Mardesich: The Secretary of the Senate manages the whole place. At least he did when I was there. He hires employees, authorizes things to happen.

Generally speaking, Sid was very fair, and tried to take care of everybody, not just Democrats. He had a very good staff. He did a heck of a job. Then, of course, he later ran for elected office. He is still there. He has risen to a position of some importance. He's minority leader now, I think, of the Senate.

Ms. Boswell: Is the position similar to the clerk of the House, then? Is the clerk the administrative head for the House, as the Secretary of the Senate is for that body?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, they're generally the same.

Ms. Boswell: Are they considered to be direct assistants to the Speaker of the House or President of the Senate?

Mr. Mardesich: Direct assistants? They're elected, you know, by the whole body. The majority side decides who it's going to be. They're generally nonpartisan, and it's a point to be that way. But, of course, they all lean to preside on the side that elected them, and they let you know what's going on. If there was any problem that they didn't want to handle directly, they would come to me as the leader in the Senate say, "There's a problem here. A little too touchy for me to touch."

"Leave it up to me, then."

But Snyder was an employee and in a different position. But he did a heck of a job.

CHAPTER 6

THE FISHING BUSINESS

Ms. Boswell: You were talking about the fishing boats.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. The insurance companies didn't pay, when I lost some boats, and that sure put me under.

Ms. Boswell: But would anybody else have been able to run the business any better?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know, probably. Hell, one just came out of the shipyard, a day out of Seattle and it sunk off the coast. It just came out of the shipyard. The other one had a fire, and one just came down for repairs. We'd just had it repaired, caulking and all that. Bang-o, out there, and it wasn't that stormy—the damn thing started flooding.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me a little more about the fishing business during those years. Here you are, you're in the Senate, but you're also expanding your fishing business during that time?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. My fishing operation was all in Alaska. I didn't fish down here.

Ms. Boswell: So the industry itself had changed a little bit. Before, you were saying in the early years, you'd go from one fishing ground to the next throughout the year. What caused the shift of focus to being primarily in Alaska?

Mr. Mardesich: It was just the fish—there were more fish up there. In those days we could move. We'd go to western Alaska in May. That would be the first thing when I was a kid, and we'd fish there in Alaska and work our way down to Seattle. We'd go there, and we could go into the Bristol Bay area and fish there. June was in the Aleutian area, late May and June. Late June to July, Bristol Bay, come around the last half of July and August on the Aleutian peninsula, Kodiak. August and September we'd go down to southeast Alaska. So, you'd start out in May and stay in Alaska until September. I'd stay there until October, and we used to do it continuously.

Once in awhile we'd ship stuff home, or once in awhile we'd come back with a load and dump it. If we got through early enough, we'd go back up. But in the Bering Sea area, we could register the gill net boats wherever we wanted. They weren't primarily gill net. In some areas, they were purse seiners. In western Alaska, which covers the Aleutian peninsula and the Bering Sea, they were all gillnetters. There were no seiners up there except in a few areas. But we had on one boat—one time we had twenty-seven gillnetters aboard, stacked them all up three deep on the deck. Then we had to start leaving some of them up there so we could have some of the deck clear to work in other areas. Then we came south working with the purse seiners.

Eventually, that all changed. How many fishing boats do you think there are in Puget Sound that are making anything at it? A handful, believe me. Salmon—there are some doing something on dragging: sole, bottom fish and all that. Salmon, for instance, the big money has all but gone away.

Ms. Boswell: And that's what you were still fishing primarily for, salmon?

Mr. Mardesich: All we fished for was salmon. Although we did have a couple of little ones that did some bottom fishing—halibut, cod, etc. The funny thing is, a couple of years ago up in the Bering Sea, Bristol Bay, my son rigged a gillnetter—actually rigged it for dragging for bottom fish before the salmon season in Bristol Bay. Actually, it could be developed in that area for a heck of a good bottom fishery. They don't seem to want to do it.

I still think that there was good fishing a few

years back, four or five years ago. I suspect because that was a cheaper fish. But there was not enough margin. Although today, you go buy some red snapper in the store and they're three or four dollars a pound. It's almost as high as salmon. Look at it today, salmon is four or five bucks a pound. We used to sell it down here for fifty cents a pound. That's what we got. Then we started doing more and more processing on our own. It was too much cost to pay the other guy to process.

Ms. Boswell: Was being in the Senate sort of a luxury? Did it take your attention away from the fishing business?

Mr. Mardesich: No, not necessarily, because fishing was May to September, October. The session was January to March, sometimes April. So far as getting stuff ready, I had crews who had been doing it for years, most of it. I didn't have to go there to get it done.

Ms. Boswell: So even throughout the 1960s, your work in the Senate continued to dovetail nicely with your fishing operations?

Mr. Mardesich: It worked well together. Even if the session dragged on, I had a couple of men who knew how to run the show and they got everything ready.

Ms. Boswell: Financially, was being in the Senate a hardship?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Even the farmers had no great problem until the sessions started lasting longer and began to conflict with their planting time. I heard some of them complaining, "We've got to get out of this place."

Ms. Boswell: I noticed in 1968, however, a little notice in the paper that said that you were going to run for the mayor of Everett.

Mr. Mardesich: I did. My illustrious friends talked me into it.

Ms. Boswell: Was this the same crew that was running the campaigns before?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, that's right. They must have had something they wanted done there, but I was defeated. I've forgotten, who ran against me? I didn't get involved in the issues. I didn't do much campaigning, either. Nevertheless, I figured, well, why not?

Ms. Boswell: Wouldn't that have interfered with fishing?

Mr. Mardesich: At that time I could have been in the Legislature and been mayor. There was no law prohibiting it. Now, we have a deal where you shouldn't be on the ballot twice. But it would have been in conflict with the fishing.

Ms. Boswell: So it wasn't something you were going to give up the Senate for? You were going to stay in the Senate. I wondered about that.

Mr. Mardesich: It would have caused a problem with the fishing. I was getting too old to swim, anyway. If the boat goes down you have to swim all that distance.

Ms. Boswell: Were you ever on another boat that went down?

Mr. Mardesich: I was on a couple of gillnetters that swamped out in Bristol Bay, yes. I had one sink out here off the coast, a one hundred and thirty footer. That's the one that we just repaired when it came into dry dock. Corking and caulking and fifteen hours later it's going down after we left Seattle. Anyway, I did go down on a couple in Bristol Bay, but that was primarily greed.

Ms. Boswell: Greed?

Mr. Mardesich: Too much fish.

Ms. Boswell: Are you telling me that they sunk because there were too many fish on them, or just that you were out there when you shouldn't have been?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. In Bristol Bay, especially. It's shallow there and it creates a lot of chop. The rougher the weather gets, the fewer boats you have

out. The guys start saying, "Oh, to hell with it," and go in. The fewer boats you have out means more fish for you. So we used to get out and stay there. It was just a matter of durability and persistence.

We were finally heading in with a load of fish and the damn pump wasn't working fast enough. We couldn't get to the water to hand bail, because the hold was full of fish, and it was getting up into the cabin. We didn't want it draining into the cabin, so we were down there with buckets throwing it out as we were heading in, and we just didn't make it. But other guys, too, were not that far, the other guys were coming in, too, and they saw us and picked us up.

Another time I was down in Kvichak, Dillingham, an area with which I was relatively unfamiliar. And again we were loaded up to the gills, but I was unfamiliar with that area. I just didn't know where the bars were and all that. We had to stop and dump a load of fish.

Ms. Boswell: What happens? Can it be towed that way?

Mr. Mardesich: No. We'd wait until the weather calmed down. Half the fish were washed overboard, and we had to just dump what was left and then wait for the tide to go out, patch it all up, prop it up on either side so she's sitting upright. When the tide comes in, you hope it's not rough again, so you just back her off full-bore.

If the water gets to an engine, and floods one, and you get the water out of that darn thing soon enough, even if it's salt water—we didn't fish in fresh water areas—if you get the water out—we'd get some fresh water which we'd pour right in there, right into the engine, lift it up, pour it full of oil—and away we'd go again. People would say, "You can't do that." We did it lots of times. We'd even take the generators off, grab the little oil filters in there, throw them in the ovens and let them cook, dry them out and put them back on the generators again. They'd never believe you could do that, but we did it.

Ms. Boswell: I'd like to ask you about a story that I heard. The story goes that you were getting either swamped or on a boat sinking and you had to abandon ship and were forced to spend time on an island.

Mr. Mardesich: That was another one. We shipped the boat up, didn't really intend to go up that year but as things worked out it became available. My daughters Monica and Megan and a crew member were with me. The girls were out of school for the summer and anxious to go to Alaska for the season. After much discussion, their mother relented and we were off.

I shipped the gillnetter aboard the steamer, but it went to Anchorage. So we had to come down from Anchorage to a little, dinky berg—there might be ten people who lived there. It was just at the start of the peninsula. They take you on a trailer—pick you up on a big trailer—and you would go over the hills and down the other side and dump it into the river there. Then you go down to Lake Iliamna, which was the short way because it was quite a steep mountain down to the water. There we put the doggone thing all together, got her going and we headed down the lake. The lake was a long lake and then you hit what was the Korchoock River draining out into Bristol Bay.

What happened, as I look at it now, when we went over the hill there was a constant and steady jarring on the trailer, which kept pushing the rudder shaft up and up on the beam, loosening the bearing that goes down into the water. Well, when we got on the other side and the driver dumps us in the water—we had nothing in the boat that time. We're in the water, sitting there by the dock, no water's coming in or a darn thing. So we head out down the lake toward the river and down to the fishing ground.

We'd been up hours and hours and days, literally. So I told my kids, "Knock it off for a couple of hours." Then I woke Meg and said, "You take it for a couple of hours and wake me." We waited for the fog to build. So she was steering away from the island. But when the thing was running—the stern of a vessel goes down when it's running—the water was coming up through the rudder post and filling the boat. We're sitting like this, and the water is coming in and water is filling up the back part. Finally, there's water being thrown around in the cabin

and Meg starts hollering for me. So we started with the bucket brigade, but we couldn't keep up with it. That damn thing went down—plop!

We had a life raft but it turned out to be defective and wouldn't inflate completely. There was no way it could hold four of us. Rod and I lashed together the boat's hatch covers with the spare nets aboard. The girls were light and were able to kneel on the covers. Rod and I sat astride the life raft. We had no paddles so we used two-by-fours. We paddled our way, and paddled our way, until we hit the shore. Lake Iliamna is a glacial lake and the water is extremely cold. Rod had taken off his boots. I kept mine on. We were partially submerged as we paddled to shore and the cold took its toll. Rod's toes were frozen on one foot and later required surgery. We were on that island for three days, eating mussels, crabs, and all that.

Ms. Boswell: You weren't able to save any food to take with you?

Mr. Mardesich: No. It took all our time just trying to keep that damn boat afloat, and when it got to be too late, we were going down, so we had to throw some stuff together. We hopped on the partially inflated life raft and hatch covers and used the two-by-fours and paddled 'til we hit the island. Then we lit fires and made smoke signals. Every once in awhile a plane would go over and we're waving and throwing stuff on the fire to make it smoke. Nobody ever stopped or came back.

One day, somebody figured out, "Where's Augie? He's supposed to be here. What's happened?" They wondered where the hell we were. Probably thought we weren't coming.

So, we see a little skiff out there quite a ways with somebody rowing the darn thing. Fortunately, it came to the same island, but it was quite a ways away. He is obviously working a net, a gillnet. It was anchored there, the net was. Finally, someone was running up and down the net taking the fish out. We're hollering, "Get the fire going. Get this," that and the other. And bang-o! We see the doggone skiff turn around and head away from us. We are sitting there, watching the skiff going back down the other side. It was a gal just going back to the other side to pick up another net, and she saw the fire and all that and wondered, "What the hell is this?" She came back and picked us up and took us to her cabin and fed us. Everybody up there had a radio and they called the pilot for the lease service to her place. They sent out a float plane and picked us up.

Ms. Boswell: That was quite an adventure.

Mr. Mardesich: We had started walking. At the time we didn't realize it was an island. We started walking. I said, "If we walk far enough, we're going to hit something." What we were doing was going around the island. We didn't make it all the way around, but we had started to conquer it.

Ms. Boswell: Was there fresh water?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. It was the lake. One time when we were walking, we saw a bear come out of the woods, a mama and two cubs, and I told the kids, "Don't even look around, keep walking straight ahead, don't make eye contact, and just keep silent. Keep moving, but don't even look at them." They were walking ahead of Rod and me then. That old mama bear, you could just see her eyeing us and eyeing the cubs, back and forth. We couldn't have been from here to that wall, maybe fifteen feet. Literally. Here's this big, black bear with two little cubs. So we just kept walking and when we got far enough away, we ran. She just ignored us. Obviously, we didn't mean to do her any harm.

Then we'd had nothing to eat, so I discovered what I thought were wild onions, I think that is what they were. Man, did I ever get a case of the GIs! But, anyway, we ate that and some raw, little, dinky mushrooms—little, dinky things. The kids wouldn't eat that. I did. We came across a big, old elk which, of course, what the hell could we do with it but ignore it, so it didn't take after us. The only other thing we saw was a beaver.

We went to one spot in the lake where I saw some fish. It was still early in the season. There wasn't much fish up in the lake, yet. We did see a fish and we tried to jump in after that damn thing trying to catch it, and we couldn't get anywhere near it. As soon as we hit the water: zip! It was gone.

Ms. Boswell: Were there moments when you really were worried that you'd never be found?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, I don't know. There are hundreds of things that go through your mind, but I figured that we were going to hit somebody sooner or later. It was that simple. As we were told later, had we gone just four or five miles further—it was tough work, it wasn't that you walked on these beautiful beaches, it was all rocks—that somebody had a little hunting lodge there where they had some food and the whole business. So we maybe could have held out a few more days there, if we could get to that. But the little gal came back and got us. Her name was Dolly Jocko and she was a welcome sight!

Ms. Boswell: Have you ever been back to that island after your ordeal? Do you know what it's called?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I have no idea what it's called. It's up around Anchorage someplace. It's a good long ways there.

Ms. Boswell: These different dangerous things that happened didn't deter you? They didn't force you to say, "I don't want to fish anymore after all of this?"

Mr. Mardesich: No. I was brought up on it. Any fisherman knows it's a dangerous occupation. My brother and father were lost in False Pass in the Aleutian Chain in the Bering Sea. You have to keep on going and not dwell on what might happen.

Ms. Boswell: I remember you saying you were right back out a few weeks later.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. We came down south again, back down here, charted another boat, and went fishing out here.

Ms. Boswell: In later times you didn't begin to say, "Well, maybe this isn't such a good occupation?"

Mr. Mardesich: Well, I figured I was a cat and I had at least nine lives. This had only been about three or four of them.

Ms. Boswell: Wasn't cold water a problem?

Mr. Mardesich: That was the problem. You get out of that stuff—when they dragged me out of this first one, I didn't even know they'd pulled me out.

Ms. Boswell: They usually say, even in the Sound, that if you are in the water, you can't last more than a few minutes.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, you can last more than a few minutes. It does put you out of it, though, pretty quickly. I didn't know who picked me up. I'm told, they picked me up, took me to the galley, and started to give me a rub-down for hours. I was still breathing and all that, I was just frozen. I later found out it was John Bacoka's boat that found me.

Ms. Boswell: Nowadays, on your boats, do they wear those foul-weather suits, those all-weather suits?

Mr. Mardesich: They have those now, the wet suits. They didn't have them in those days. How much are they going to help you, though? You're out there in the boat, and unless you are wearing one of those all the time, you don't really have a chance to put one on as the boat is sinking. If it's a slow sink, you have time to put it on. If it's a roll-over, you get out of there with next to nothing.

Ms. Boswell: But you still kept coming back, though.

Mr. Mardesich: Well, that's the point, isn't it?

CHAPTER 7

HENRY JACKSON AND NATIONAL POLITICS

Ms. Boswell: Were you at all involved in broader Democratic politics, either statewide or national?

Mr. Mardesich: No. The only thing I did in politics later was to get involved when Henry Jackson was running for the presidency.

Obviously, I was involved in trying to elect Democrats in the House and the Senate. I had to get involved in that, but I didn't go around and speak. A lot of them do now, but I didn't. The only thing I got directly involved with was Henry Jackson running for the presidency. I went to California and Florida, and three or four other places.

Ms. Boswell: I want to talk some more about that. How strong was the Democratic Party organization in Washington in the 1960s?

Mr. Mardesich: I never felt it was that strong. There was a good, strong Henry Jackson committee, but I didn't feel there was a strong Democratic committee. The Republicans had a stronger association than the Democrats had. Scoop had his own.

Ms. Boswell: Was that a pretty much Everett-controlled, Everett-centered kind of group?

Mr. Mardesich: First, of course, he was from here, so he had all kinds of people from here who were in his group—a lot of them. People who worked for him and campaigned and all that sort of thing.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think he would have made a good president?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. Scoop was very analytical and wouldn't get swept away too easily by rhetoric and flash. People say he was very conservative. I found once in awhile that he was too liberal, but he was obviously down the middle there. But he was analytical, that you have to grant him.

Ms. Boswell: Were you one of the initiators of the run for the presidency in 1972?

Mr. Mardesich: I wouldn't say that I was an initiator.

Ms. Boswell: In the papers, your name seems to be fairly prominent in terms of the very early suggestion of his running.

Mr. Mardesich: Well, when the thought came up, we helped spread the gospel, no two ways about that.

He was a real worker, that guy—on the go all the time. Shake hands, talk to people, and speak wherever—sometimes two or three times a day during the campaign, all over the state to groups—any kind of a group. He was a hard worker.

Ms. Boswell: What involvement did you have in that presidential campaign?

Mr. Mardesich: It was just trying to get support—get around and talk. My position was to get around to a lot of local legislators and various other states. I knew some of the leaders in the other states personally, so I'd go there and rally support for him. I didn't do it very well. But if we needed a convention of leaders once in awhile, I did that sort of thing. And so if I knew the guy's name, I got to those people and got them involved.

Ms. Boswell: Was John Salter involved in this presidential run, too?

Mr. Mardesich: You bet he was. That was one of the reasons I was involved. He was down in Florida with me, too.

Ms. Boswell: What did you do down in Florida?

Mr. Mardesich: I talked to people—the people in the political world. Now, as I say, it started with majority leader in the House, and then, "I'm going to introduce you to the majority leader in the Senate and have him introduce you to some of the main senators, some of the main House members." And he talked to them, I think—talked about the movement. Why he'd make an excellent president, and all that. They listened, a lot of them.

Ms. Boswell: We were talking about your campaign organization earlier. What about Jackson's? Was it pretty well-funded? How was it organized?

Mr. Mardesich: He had an organization that was the Jackson organization, as distinguished from the Democratic organization. Maybe one happened because of the other. Maybe there was not a strong Democratic deal there because there was a strong Scoop deal. He had all those people.

Therefore that left few labeled for the Democrats. And there was no great activity in the early times by the Democrats. There was always some activity, somebody running for county chairman, and so on and so forth. But I didn't get involved in that until Scoop actually ran. They tried to get me involved a number of times, but I'd had enough to do.

Ms. Boswell: What about Magnuson? How did he strike you?

Mr. Mardesich: Maggie was a very friendly guy—a heck of a good public relations man. He was also easy to talk to.

You go to Washington D.C. for someone or to do something—heck, yes, Maggie would make time for you. He'd make it a point to make himself available. You just don't find that all the time, you know. Maggie was good that way.

It was no problem in Scoop's office because they all knew me. I could go in, especially when he was available, I'd be there, period. Maggie was a good one in that regard, getting to the people and responding to people. And not only that, he was a good poker player.

Ms. Boswell: Did you play poker with him?

Mr. Mardesich: A few times.

Ms. Boswell: Who won?

Mr. Mardesich: Well, I didn't lose all of them, I'll tell you that.

Ms. Boswell: It seems as though Maggie and Scoop really worked well together. They were foils for each other in certain ways.

Mr. Mardesich: They worked well together. Scoop, I think, probably spent more time trying to convince Maggie by far, than Maggie did trying to convince Scoop about an issue. Maggie, more than Scoop, was a gut-reaction type; Scoop would be more of the read-it-all type, too.

Ms. Boswell: There was a dinner that was given when Kennedy was still president in the early 1960s in honor of Magnuson. I can't remember if it was his birthday or a certain number of years of service, but Kennedy came out for it. It seemed by the newspaper account an incredible event. Did you go to that?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. It was down at the hotel. They had a big crowd. Even before that, I got to know Kennedy through John Salter. When he was first running, Kennedy came out here to do some politicking. John says, "Come on, there's something we have to do." We go to the hotel, to Kennedy's room, and we sat there for two hours. In those days, even today, you have a nominating process that involves the whole Democratic Party. And so he was sitting there and asking me to define every Democrat within the Legislature: "What about that? What do you think his politics are?" He was cross-examining me for hours about all these people, even those people who were dignitaries in the party as distinguished from politicians themselves. Just asking me questions about all of them, so that he knew how to approach them. He must have done it everywhere. I think that's one of the reasons the guy won.

Ms. Boswell: What did you think of him as a man

and a politician?

Mr. Mardesich: I thought he was a good one—after that meeting, especially. That was the first time I met him. I met him back in D.C. a couple times, and he did come out here once or twice. Prior to that meeting, I had been leaning toward Adlai Stevenson. I mentioned this in our conversation. After his return, he sent me his book, *The Strategy for Peace,* with a note saying, "I hope you are not still wavering!" I still have it. I think he must have typed it himself as there is a typo error. He signed it Jack. Just a regular guy! No wonder he was popular.

I thought Kennedy was a good man. I didn't find that he just rambled in meetings, especially in labor meetings. There was usually a point to it—not just being a chatter-box.

Ms. Boswell: What about Lyndon Johnson? Did you ever have an opportunity to talk with him?

Mr. Mardesich: I met him on a couple of occasions, but that's about all.

Ms. Boswell: So he didn't do quite the same kind of politicking?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a different guy than Kennedy by a long shot. He was an old politician.

Ms. Boswell: What about your own ambitions? Did you ever think about running for a national office? Did Washington D.C. interest you?

Mr. Mardesich: At one time they tried to talk me into it, but I had a couple of large boats at that time. They each had a fleet of gillnetters and I had enough to do without running for Congress. Although, I suppose I'd have probably been better off if I'd turned the business over to someone else. But that's one of the reasons I never did involve myself in Congressional politics that much.

Ms. Boswell: Is that something you regret?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I don't have any regrets about not doing it. I do regret having not turned the business over to someone else, because a couple of times I really had too much to do.

Ms. Boswell: I thought we might talk about Henry Jackson's role in Washington state and Everett politics, since you were actively involved in the Jackson for President campaign.

First of all, tell me a little bit about Jackson. What was he like, in your opinion?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a very pragmatic type—said to be a liberal, but was really fairly middle-of-the-road. On social programs he was very liberal. I got to meet him because we knew his administrative assistant, John Salter. John was not Scoop's administrative assistant when he first ran for the office of prosecuting attorney here in Everett. There was another fellow who was a friend of ours who worked in that position.

We got to know Scoop when we got out of law school; my brother went to work in the prosecutor's office for awhile. Actually, we knew John Salter before that, having met him any number of times at the local yacht club bar. We got to know him in that way, and when Scoop was running, we gave him assistance in the campaign, because we had gotten to know them all. When Scoop ran for that prosecutor's position, we helped in that. Then, of course later, over the years, in Congress and for the U.S. Senate.

Then I made a quick trip to a few places on account of the Henry Jackson for President campaign. We made the contacts with those people. We'd just go a day or two before Scoop was going and meet these people and arrange for a meeting. Scoop would appear at some political affair, but we'd be there a day or so ahead of time, trying to line up these people to meet with him briefly, independently of the public meeting, and get acquainted. That was our connection there.

Henry was a friend of the Quigley family, my wife's family, for many years. Her father was a doctor here in Everett, and he was the doctor for Scoop and his family. Dr. Quigley was active in Democratic politics.

Ms. Boswell: What did you think of Scoop as a politician?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a good one. Obviously,

he wouldn't have been there that long if he hadn't been.

Ms. Boswell: What made him a good politician?

Mr. Mardesich: He listened. He listened to people and even when he disagreed, he would disagree very civilly. Not like I am; I get excited. He would say, "Oh, come on. How about this? How about that?" Pretty soon he'd have them thinking the way he did. He was a very low-key type most of the time, even when he spoke publicly. He wasn't a Magnuson type. Magnuson would get up there and shake his arms and sound off. Scoop was quite level-toned.

As I say, he was very pragmatic. He did his homework, obviously. Those issues he worked on, he knew something about. People came to respect him because of that. That's why he became as high an official in the Democratic Party as he did. Actually, Kennedy was considering him for vice president, and I think he would have. Had it not been for the fact that Kennedy felt—and his advisors felt—that he had to get some of those southern states, including Texas, with a lot of people and so on, Scoop would have been vice president with Kennedy. I actually believe that Kennedy would have preferred that. But Kennedy needed a better balance across the country.

Ms. Boswell: The Northwest didn't have a lot of clout in terms of political votes.

Mr. Mardesich: No. Although, Scoop was well known then.

Ms. Boswell: Was he as serious as he's often portrayed?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. He was quite serious—looking and talking. He had a low-key, serious manner, but he had a sense of humor as well.

He was quite different from Magnuson. Magnuson was much more outgoing, more open—more raising of his voice. More of an act. Scoop was just sort of a level-playing type. And yet they got along beautifully.

Ms. Boswell: They certainly worked well together, or seemed to.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, they did. And probably—I would assume—maybe that difference in character was one of the reasons. They were two different types, but they came together when it came to the political issues.

Ms. Boswell: Were they good friends outside the office, or not?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, I think so. They were friends, but they had different interests. I remember Magnuson going fishing and that kind of thing, which was not the type of thing Scoop would do. And Magnuson getting involved in poker games at the drop of a hat. Not Scoop.

Ms. Boswell: Did Scoop socialize at all around Everett?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, he did. He went to so many political gatherings I would assume you would think that was his social life. He never came out here—except on rare occasions—when there were not political meetings to be held. Even if he was coming on a vacation, he would arrange for a political meeting. He was constantly politicking.

Ms. Boswell: So, he never hung out at the yacht club bar?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Salter used to come down there. I was only at the yacht club bar because our boat was down there.

Ms. Boswell: If Scoop wasn't around very much, what about his role in Everett politics?

Mr. Mardesich: One thing Scoop did was stay active in the Democratic clubs. There are Democratic clubs in almost every county—there was a Democratic Club here. But there was also a Henry Jackson Club in Everett, in Snohomish County. He got all the people involved in that—all the Democrats of any clout—and there were very few people who were actually involved with, or gave a dang about the Democratic Club. It was very low-key, a very small part of the political

machine here. Scoop had the county machinery.

Ms. Boswell: How did that come about?

Mr. Mardesich: He did it on purpose. You want something to be sent out to the public, a campaign pamphlet, wham-bang! He had his one hundred helpers right now. That was the reason for it. And it worked. He had twice as large an organization as the Democratic Party did.

Ms. Boswell: Did that annoy any of the Democrats here? I would think that it would sort of alienate some of the other leadership in the county, or wasn't there any other leadership?

Mr. Mardesich: I think that the leadership was organized around Scoop ninety percent of the time, so it was very little problem on that account. He probably helped line them up and they became, even in the Democratic Party, leaders. They were all his friends, too. He had no problem in that regard.

Ms. Boswell: To what do you attribute this sort of organizational interest of his? Is that something that he just sort of came to?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know whether he or John Salter did it. John was the type that got around and talked to a lot of people, but it was more on a friendship basis.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me more about John Salter. Was he a local Everett person, too?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a local boy here. Lived up here a few blocks on Colby, maybe about Thirty-eighth or Thirty-ninth. His father had died when John was young, and he lived with his mother and sisters. How he and Scoop got involved I really don't recall—probably schooling, time and age-wise. John was a few years older than I, so that would put him around Scoop's age. I've got to believe that's where it started. Then they got together for those political races, and once they did, they were together until Scoop died of a heart attack.

Ms. Boswell: So, you think that Salter, in part, may have been the power behind at least the organizational aspect of Scoop's political machine?

Mr. Mardesich: Salter knew everyone who had any connection with politics in this area—even in the King County area, and in the state area. He knew them all. That was his job as an A.A. He helped get people into the Democratic Party state chairmanship. They were really well organized. That organization, along with Scoop's dedication to the job: work, work, work, go to meetings after meetings, after meetings, and he became the natural place to go. He had a very broad base. Business generally supported him; the public generally supported him. The unions supported him.

Ms. Boswell: Was that support primarily because they thought he was conscientious and well informed?

Mr. Mardesich: I think a lot of it came from that, yes. Scoop was a very analytical type, and when it came to the issues he studied them thoroughly. He knew what they were about and he could talk to anyone about them. If someone disagreed with him, he didn't necessarily debate with them, he worked to bring them around and convince them in a very level, low-key way. And he did succeed in getting people aboard.

Ms. Boswell: Did he have much influence on—given this strong organization that he had—local politics? Did he ever get involved? They helped you, for example, but was their hand on local political issues or the people who ran?

Mr. Mardesich: I would think they probably were. I know John was more instrumental in getting my brother involved. Salter, very often, used to come over to our place for dinner and we'd sit around and talk about it all. He was also low-key, but had a very close friendship basis with all kinds of people. I think what he was doing most of the time was to get some feeling on the public reaction. We'd go to Seattle sometimes and have lunch. Meet with people.

That's what he did beautifully.

I think half of what he was doing, as I look at this in retrospect, was feeling which way the public sentiment was going on various issues. He was feeling it out or seeing what people would think about this or that, how to approach it. His understanding of the issues was very broad as well as Scoop's. He didn't get into the details of reading bills, but he had a wide knowledge as to what the people were talking about and thinking about, and of course passed that on to Scoop. He was probably one of the reasons why Scoop knew which way the issues were going and how to approach them. Salter was a heck of a good man.

Ms. Boswell: It sounds like it. Scoop must have been pretty lucky to have somebody like that.

Mr. Mardesich: He was. John was a seminarian for awhile, and almost became a priest.

Ms. Boswell: But then he went into politics. That was an about-face.

Mr. Mardesich: Then he went into politics. It's like going from Heaven into Hell.

Ms. Boswell: Did he have a legal background at all?

Mr. Mardesich: No.

Ms. Boswell: What kind of an impact does somebody like Jackson have on state politics or the Legislature?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know that he got involved in too many legislative races. I don't think he did. He might just drop a comment—if there were a dozen politicians up on the stage: "I want to introduce my good friend," that sort of thing. But so far as getting directly involved personally in the races, he didn't do much of that. Salter did most of that.

Of course, he helped us, but what the hell, we were family. We were all family, especially with Salter—Salter was over to our house half the time. All the Slavic groups, those types of things, he lined them up to meet at our place, because the family home was fairly large. As I say, he used to drop in for an evening, and we'd end up at our house—we were going to go out somewhere that evening—he'd come over either before dinner or after dinner and we'd sit around arguing politics from 7:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. before we decided to go out. There was always some issue in the paper and we'd kick that stuff around until hell wouldn't have it.

Ms. Boswell: What about state issues?

Mr. Mardesich: Scoop never got involved that much. Not where he ever talked to me about anything, at least. Maybe he thought, "Augie—you can't argue with him." I don't know. But he never did really talk to me about many issues. I don't even recall one that he did.

Ms. Boswell: Would somebody like Magnuson? Did Maggie not get involved in state politics either?

Mr. Mardesich: Magnuson, oh heck, he knew all the state political types. He knew all those people, of course. I know that they helped get people installed as state Democratic chairmen and that sort of thing. But so far as getting involved in state issues, there just wasn't much of that I was aware of.

Ms. Boswell: Was there really a division, between national and state political leaders?

Mr. Mardesich: There was a big division. Once in awhile there'd be issues which would go both ways, yes. I don't even recall, offhand, an issue where Scoop really got down to talking to me about the problem.

Ms. Boswell: If you had to assess Jackson's contributions to the state, how would you?

Mr. Mardesich: He had a very broad impact, obviously, because he was there so long and because he was so powerful in the legislative machinery in D.C. If people had problems and they wanted them addressed, they'd get hold of Johnny Salter or Scoop directly, and then they would do

something about it.

Ms. Boswell: Did people consider him to be someone who would be helpful if it was an important issue?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. But, if he thought they were wrong, he would say, "Oh, come on, why do you feel this way?" He'd try to get them over to his side on the problem. He did a good, smooth job of it.

Ms. Boswell: How about his own political views? I think particularly of his somewhat hawkish views on foreign policy that provoked a more lively debate than some of his other stands. What about his views on foreign policy? How were they received, first of all in this state?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think that there was any great problem with his views here. I don't think the hawkish business was that important to the people. They didn't react that way as far as I could see, at least.

Ms. Boswell: What were your own views about Vietnam? How did Jackson's dovetail with your own?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall his views on Vietnam. I know my own view was, "What the hell are we doing there? Why are we there?" The French moved out and we moved in. For what purpose? To keep it all on a level plane over there? Did it stay on a level plane? No. It went Communist, the whole area. It was only, in time, when communism started crumbling everywhere, that they became more nationalistic, less communistic, and more democratic oriented, and I use that term loosely. Their version of a democracy is somewhat different than ours. But, I, personally, saw no point to half of what was going on over there.

How many people did we lose in the Far East? Forty-five thousand or so, maybe. More than we lost in the Second World War, or almost. To what point? I couldn't see it. And yet people felt—political types, those that I heard talking now and then—that this was an issue that the people were concerned about—the spread of communism. I'm not so sure that they were, but who knows?

Ms. Boswell: It's often said that the media coverage of Vietnam brought the nation's attention to war, and death in general. Do you think that this constant media coverage of Vietnam, in all of its horrors, had an impact on the press and America?

Mr. Mardesich: That's true. It was before us all the time. After so many years, people began wondering, "What this is all about?" That's what I think happened in Vietnam. Finally, the people in charge decided we'd better get out of this because they could see the handwriting on the wall. The public reaction was going the other way. I'm not saying that politicians are concerned with public reaction, except about ninety percent of the time!

Ms. Boswell: Did the public reaction to Vietnam, or even just the issue, have any bearing on legislative issues or on the Legislature?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think particularly on the Legislature. On the national scene, obviously, but I don't think particularly on the state Legislature.

Ms. Boswell: State legislatures don't vote on war policy just as sort of a statement?

Mr. Mardesich: If they did, it was something I never paid attention to, because its impact was so minor that it was pathetic. It might affect our local congressmen and senators, but that's about all, believe me. And we already knew what their thinking was.

Ms. Boswell: We talked a lot about Henry Jackson and his campaign for the presidency. With that in mind, during that same time, you supported a presidential primary in the state—the idea of holding a presidential primary. Was that tied to the Jackson bid for the presidency?

Mr. Mardesich: No. We'd been talking about that for some time. It was not directly tied to that, although it occurred to us that it would be that

many more votes you'd have going into the national convention. The state of Washington's delegation was not that large a force in the whole electoral vote process. But it was not the real reason we considered it. Yes, we did propose it.

Ms. Boswell: What made you do it? Did you want Washington to be more of a force?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh sure, yes.

Ms. Boswell: What did you envision and how would it work?

Mr. Mardesich: Just set a date around the same time as the others do. Some of them set it ten months ahead to get the publicity. That's all we wanted to do is to get our ideas from the primaries. I think we planned to hold it sometime in March, April, somewhere in there. I don't know exactly. Part of the reason was to get people thinking that way—that is, about who is running.

The psychology you see even today—and it has a bad effect at times—they see those electoral votes going on and people say, "So-and-so is going to win, so why worry about it?" The alternative is, "Oh, he's lost, so there's no sense even going to vote." You try to tie those things to a certain date, so that the influence doesn't affect everyone else.

Ms. Boswell: Who else was supporting it? Was it a broad-based sector or was it primarily a Democratic effort?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think there was any argument about support from either party. I think that most of them felt it was not a bad idea. It was not a critical deal—not too important in the scheme of things, when you're there working on a million bills.

Ms. Boswell: Why do you think the Jackson bid for the presidency failed? How would you assess it, looking back on it?

Mr. Mardesich: Jackson was a heck of a good legislator and a worker. He knew what was going on and he did his homework. But he did lack that charisma that the president or a potential candidate should have—a little selling ability. Scoop sold in the state of Washington because he was a hard working son-of-a-gun. People appreciated the work he did and he was constantly on the move and the go, campaigning here in the state.

He'd come back from Washington D.C. and if he was going to be here two or three days, he was out on the road all the time, literally. He was a real worker.

As a consequence, so many people in the state knew him personally. They all knew what he'd done. He got good publicity from the press—they appreciated the fact that he was a hard worker and got things for this state. That's why he won so easily all the time: he worked. Same with anything else.

Ms. Boswell: Another issue that Jackson was heavily involved in was support for the Supersonic Transport, since Boeing was the state's largest employer. I want to step back and look at Boeing, and the issue of the SST. Was there anything that the state Legislature could actually have done when it fell through? Was that truly only a national issue?

Mr. Mardesich: The state really had nothing directly to do with that issue. It could help with taxes.

Boeing had a lobbyist, Bud Coffey. I don't care who you ask, I think ninety percent of the legislators will admit to the fact that he was the best lobbyist down there. He was very analytical, not high pressure. He'd ask for a meeting, and if you'd set up the meeting at four o'clock, but if you were busy at four, he'd sit in your front office waiting. Even if it took until six before you finished your meeting, or later. Then it would be, "Do you have a minute, or do you want to put it off?" He would explain the "yeses" and the "nos." Why this is a good bill, why this is a bad bill. Or, "Here's our issue on a certain subject and here's why we feel this way. Now the arguments on the other side are, one, two, and three." He explained it all to you, both sides. He would say, "This is our position." That was the end of the pressure; he was simply saying, "This is our position." And gave you the arguments on both sides, which very rarely happens with lobbyists. They have a

tendency to merely espouse their own side of the question. But Coffey would explain it all, and that's why he was a good lobbyist. The best Boeing ever had, and I think one of the best that's ever been in the state.

Ms. Boswell: What was his background? Was his background in aviation?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't even know, to tell you the truth. I don't know what his background was.

Ms. Boswell: So, Coffey was really instrumental in getting legislative support for Boeing issues?

Mr. Mardesich: He was a very good lobbyist, and he did his job well. I would say with rare exception, people in the Legislature had a high regard for him. And they listened to him. He'd lay it all out so there was not too much argument. It wasn't putting the heat on or begging you to go with them. None of that. It was just, "Here's why."

Ms. Boswell: Knowing that Boeing was the largest employer in the state couldn't hurt his cause.

Mr. Mardesich: That would have its influence on people, naturally. But his approach to the whole subject matter of lobbying was such that people respected him and listened. I suspect, also, the fact that Boeing was the largest employer in the state, especially in King County and Snohomish County, it would have its effect on the legislators in the area and in the state.

Another thing, Coffey did not get involved in all these other extraneous issues that did not pertain to them. Many lobbyists have a tendency to start arguing about issues in which they have nothing more than a passing interest, which can alienate more people. Coffey stuck to his own issues. Only, if you asked him about something, would he start expounding and broaden the subject matter and bring in this and that. He didn't usually offer just offhand opinions as to various issues, which was smart.

Ms. Boswell: So he stayed out of the fire?

Mr. Mardesich: He stayed out of the rest of the fireworks and stuck to Boeing issues unless you put the question to him. And he knew what the hell was going on in all those issues.

You couldn't be a Coffey and not listen to all those various people talking without picking up knowledge on damn near any subject that was on that calendar. He was smart enough to—unless it was an issue that affected them—stay out of it, openly. Unless you put the question to him, and then: "Here's what I know about it."

Ms. Boswell: Did people ask him his opinion on a lot of things?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, sure. He made it a point to know them in detail. A heck of a good lobbyist—he would have been a good legislator.

Ms. Boswell: Let's get back to the SST as an issue. What were the ramifications for the state of that larger issue of the failure of the SST?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't particularly note that as a state we were too involved in the question. That was a question more for Boeing to address than the state, I thought. And they did, obviously.

Ms. Boswell: When the SST lost its government support, Boeing went through what's sometimes called the "Boeing bust" period, when they laid off so many people. Did they come to the Legislature and say, "Hey, we're in trouble?" How was the Legislature involved?

Mr. Mardesich: With Boeing, from my observations, you didn't have to beat them over the head to get the point across. They put plenty of money into development of various things—not only the SST, but other planes. I mean billions. Never heard too much about it, did you? If they had spent billions on a particular project that suddenly collapsed, that would have its impact, obviously. And Boeing was thinking that the SST was going to go ahead, and they had all those people that they were ready to put into the program, and now the program collapses. What do they do? They started letting people go right away. And, since they had been thinking in terms

of that level of work and it didn't happen, they had to retrench and they did. Period. They react before it becomes obvious.

They do it today. Boeing's been hiring people for a year and a half. It's in the paper once in awhile that if there's a little bit of a recession, the hiring stops. It doesn't really mean recession, just a slow down. The hiring stops, slows down. They anticipate. They've had what I think is damn good management.

Ms. Boswell: The Legislature didn't ever have the sense that Boeing was "crying wolf," or that Boeing was trying to exercise too much power or control?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose some people felt that. I never did. If I had felt a particular way on an issue, I never got worked over by Coffey and their other lobbyists.

Ms. Boswell: Was there any sense in the late 1960s or early 1970s that too much of the state's economic well-being rested on Boeing?

Mr. Mardesich: I think there was a feeling of that sort around, that Boeing was too big a factor. So, what are you going to do about it?

Ms. Boswell: Was there anything the Legislature could do?

Mr. Mardesich: What? But time has eliminated that argument because Boeing, today, when they do something, hardly causes a blip on our employment. Have you noticed that? If Boeing announced something it usually was wham-o! Headlines. It caused a big drop in the old days. Now it's just dips and ups and downs when they announce things. They're becoming a smaller part of our working population all the time—even with their 100,000 employees.

There were 600,000 people in this state in the last eight years—600,000 new ones. Where do they work, Boeing? No. Boeing employment has probably gone up from—it's probably down to around seven, eight, and nine years ago—now it's up to 100,000. Big deal, 30,000 out of an employment force of probably 250,000. There are 600,000 new people and maybe 250,000 of them are searching for employment. It's become more of a minor factor all the time.

Ms. Boswell: What's caused the lessening of Boeing's role?

Mr. Mardesich: They are a smaller proportion of the population—the working population. As the state has expanded, other things have expanded as well.

Ms. Boswell: As a legislator, though, Boeing certainly has a big presence in Everett and the surrounding areas. Did they make an effort to come to you and say, "This is an issue with us," or "We're not happy about this."

Mr. Mardesich: Bud Coffey is the one who did that. They had two or three people there, but Coffey was the principal one at the time.

Once in awhile, as a leader, you'd get a call from one of them, but not that often. All the time that I was leading that outfit, the House or Senate, I think we had one, may have been two—I don't recall offhand—dinners with half a dozen legislative leaders and half a dozen Boeing leaders. It was no particular issue that it was around; it was just to keep the relationship up. They met with the leaders on both sides and the people would get to know each other. They might continue those talks later and give a reason or an open door approach to talk to these various people.

Ms. Boswell: It was not a heavy pressure?

Mr. Mardesich: It was not high pressure. Not with me at least.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about that dinner. What was that like?

Mr. Mardesich: There was one out at that hotel, the Tyee. They hired the room and they'd sit around the room there and take a table. Once in awhile they would talk an issue, but most of the time it was just talk. It was not an attempt to really convince you of some issue at the time. I think the reason for the meeting was to develop the

relationships. So, you'd get a call from one of those—I almost said second lieutenants—underlings, but they were pretty high on the depth chart. If one of the legislators would then get a call from them, they'd know who they were talking with.

Boeing probably made it a point—I don't know that this is so, but if I'd been running it, it would have been, "Hey, Joe, you spend your time with these people." And they may have even deceived us that way, I don't know. "You develop an acquaintance with these two, and you develop with those." Spread it around. We were all not politicians at one end and Boeing people at the other. We were mixed, and I suspect it was not by chance. So, that gave those people who sat next to you and chatted all evening an open door. They'd call you up and you'd know who you were talking to. I suspect that's why they did it. That's an assumption on my part.

Ms. Boswell: Some people believed that the location of I-405, the new north-south corridor, was there simply to satisfy Boeing's demands for greater access to its plants. Because that was something Boeing wanted.

Mr. Mardesich: Is I-405 the one going up the Eastside through Bellevue? Because it went by their plant on the south end of the lake? I don't have any doubt that they had some input on that.

Ms. Boswell: Many of their new employees, especially throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, were living over on the Eastside.

Mr. Mardesich: I don't have any doubt that they put in their two-cents worth. Why wouldn't they? And that's a big part of the traffic. So if you had all those people running around on bad roads, it would tie the place up even more. So they were doing not only something for Boeing, but something for that area they were in. I don't have any doubt that they talked to people about that, including the highway department, and including legislators.

CHAPTER 8

THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

Ms. Boswell: What was your reputation? You won your elections pretty handily.

Mr. Mardesich: I used the approach that if I do nothing, no one will ever hear anything about me.

Ms. Boswell: You know you did a lot, so that's not true. What do you think your reputation was, looking back?

Mr. Mardesich: I used to do my homework. That's why I'm blind now. I did a lot of reading of a lot of bills. That's one rule for success in the Legislature.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think the voting public recognizes that?

Mr. Mardesich: The word gets around. The people come down there for things, and you work on them and you get them through, and word gets around. With someone who really looks at the measures—your reputation follows you real quickly.

Ms. Boswell: In your reelection campaign in 1970, you had a campaign platform of sorts. Very brief, but it said that the two main local issues of 1970 that you were interested in were unemployment and real property taxes. What about the national issues such as Vietnam and government costs?

Mr. Mardesich: I think those are still true, are they not?

Ms. Boswell: Probably so.

Mr. Mardesich: Except it isn't Vietnam now, it's somewhere else, Albania, Bosnia. What can you do or say about government costs?

Ms. Boswell: In terms of campaigning and local issues, how much did local issues, as opposed to the man, the candidate, come into play? People knew you. They knew you worked hard, and your reputation grew. How much were people's votes based on the issues?

Mr. Mardesich: There's some of that. Primarily, that's through the organized groups, like labor. There were taxpayer groups, a few of them, but they were not as active or strong. Labor had the strongest, and every once in awhile I used to tangle with them.

The local labor leaders would get in a battle with the state leaders, because I did, generally, those things that I thought were right for labor without going overboard.

Joe Davis got upset with me because I didn't do something he wanted me to do, but the locals, most of whom I knew, still supported me and spoke for me.

I think that's even true today. You don't have to be for everything to get elected as long as you have a reason why you're not doing it. The reason is in the reading of the bills. If they go too far, they're not good bills in my book.

Ms. Boswell: We talked a little about the unemployment situation and the problems of the Boeing bust and other downturns in the economy in the early 1970s. What, on the local level, did people want? When they were talking about unemployment, what did they want?

Mr. Mardesich: I think that was tied in with taxes, too. Unemployment is a thing that's related to almost everything: prices, land costs, home building, home costs, whatever—everything is related to that. As soon as the unemployment starts getting higher, there's a real concern. There's a withdrawal from the market. It's critical that you find some way to maintain the flow.

But that's not the only answer or the only

question either. Unemployment is a real disaster if you're unemployed with a family. It doesn't take long for that unemployment compensation to disappear. I never had to worry about a job because my dad always used to work us to death.

Ms. Boswell: Was that primarily a Democratic issue? The compensation issue?

Mr. Mardesich: No, no. Unemployment compensation, there's a party-line issue on the rate of pay on that. But the same is true of the minimum wage. There's debate about that which follows party lines, somewhat. A number of those things are all party lines, but there's always some flexibility on either side. So you work towards the middle.

Ms. Boswell: What's your stance about real property taxes?

Mr. Mardesich: As it is today, they're too high.

Ms. Boswell: But how about back in the 1970s?

Mr. Mardesich: It was true then, too.

Of course there was this debate about if you don't want property taxes you have some other kind of taxes. You've got the sales tax, and then they tried on a number of occasions to put on the income tax in the state. My position on adding an income tax was very simple: provided we set up the property, real estate, income tax, sales tax, and we tie those all together and assign a certain proportion to each one by law. So they can't come along and the Republicans take over—I'll use that as an example: the Republicans used the sales tax rather than the income tax. I felt there ought to be an element in the law that says, "This is the ratio and it shall remain the ratio to keep that balance."

A lot of people wanted to eliminate the sales tax, and the argument was made very strongly that you're taxing even the very poorest, and my answer to that was very simple: we're supporting those people, we'll simply add the amount of the tax to the welfare package. So what's the complaint now? We'll at least make them aware that they are paying taxes even though we upped their benefits, added on equal to whatever we've added. I still think it's a good idea to keep that balance and have them all.

Ms. Boswell: Too much opposition?

Mr. Mardesich: It was an issue. It wasn't so much that there was opposition, as how much time do you spend on an issue like that? You could debate this one for days: balance this, that or the other thing. You simply don't have the time down there.

Ms. Boswell: What about national issues like Vietnam? What was your position on that and how did that affect your local political stance?

Mr. Mardesich: Of course we had nothing to do with it at the state level. My position was, what the heck, the French just walked out of there. They walked out of Vietnam. Why did we go in? That was something I never could understand. The French said, "To heck with it," and walked away, and we moved in. Why? I don't understand why to this day. That's why I complained about it.

Ms. Boswell: How did you get on with Jackson who was a supporter of the war?

Mr. Mardesich: We got along.

Ms. Boswell: That wasn't an issue?

Mr. Mardesich: I did what I did, and we didn't argue about those things.

Ms. Boswell: What about government costs? Do you think government was too expensive even at the state level?

Mr. Mardesich: It's too expensive, in my book, for what you get for it. There's a tendency when you want to do something a little different or add something to the budget, somebody should say, "Wait a minute, is there anything that we can cut out to get the funds that we need?" There's very little cutting out unless you really put up a battle. So, every little new project that comes up is an increase in the tax rate. It's a natural deal because someone is trying to protect all those other issues.

Unless you have an ax you're wielding, it's hard to do.

When I got to the Senate, I had Hubert Donohue from over in Eastern Washington, who was chairman of Ways and Means. He was a good one to work with. He was tough.

Ms. Boswell: Did the campaigns change all that much when you moved to the Senate?

Mr. Mardesich: No.

Ms. Boswell: You had this platform, but was it pretty much the same running all the time?

Mr. Mardesich: The John Salters of the world, the Archie Bakers of the world whom I mentioned, were the ones who really got me going in this thing. They put a lot of those ads together. We talked about stuff and they put it together. I was never a good campaigner, believe me.

Ms. Boswell: What did you not like about it?

Mr. Mardesich: I never disliked it, but it was not that appealing or fun for me. Baker and those people used to give me heck. I'd start and they'd say, "Okay, we're going door-to-door. We're going to start another street. Up there on Eighteenth Street we're going south along Colby and turn and come back on Rucker. We'll cover that area. They'd come back and pick me up an hour or two later, and I hadn't done one block. "What the heck have you been doing?" they'd say. "I've been going house to house," I'd reply.

I always made it a point to ask them if they had any interest in politics. What were the things that bothered them about the political goings on of the time and what issues might they be interested in. Invariably you'd get into a discussion. Instead of being there two minutes, "Hi, my name's August Mardesich; here's my literature. I'm running for Senate, and I'd appreciate your vote," you'd end up in a discussion.

But you do have that tendency to really get into a discussion. At least I did. And I think it was important to get to know what those people were feeling and thinking about.

Ms. Boswell: Today we hear a lot about campaign financing and all those sundry problems associated with it.

Mr. Mardesich: It didn't take as much to get it done then. It's not like today. It's gotten out of hand, and I don't know what the answer is. Campaign finance, even when I was getting out of there, was getting pretty doggone high. I didn't have any problem raising whatever funds I needed because of the fact that I was majority leader and all those people would come to help.

But it is a problem, no question about it. Too much monetary influence is all bad. On the other hand, there's ways to get around a lot of it. It's quite evident today. You get groups who will go out and put up the money for an election or even reelection. If somebody wants to support me over the other guy, how do I stop it? How does anyone stop it? It's the right of free speech. I'm not putting the ads in; it's some group.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have to develop some specific policy or practice for campaign donations, as to what you would take or what you wouldn't? How do you work that?

Mr. Mardesich: I used to have a heck of a bunch of people. And we had the old pros like Salter, who had been raising money for Jackson for a hundred years. They knew all kinds of people; they knew who to contact and who to ask to get out and do the fund raising for me.

We'd set up a meeting once in awhile, not only for me, but for a number of politicians, and there would be literally hundreds of people there. I didn't ask for it—they'd get up and make the old spiel. Baker would get up: "It's going to take some money to get Mardesich—or whoever it was—reelected. Get out your checkbook now and give them whatever you can afford."

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever find yourself in the situation where interest groups who did donate to your campaign expected something?

Mr. Mardesich: I think I just mentioned a little earlier a fellow by the name of Joe Davis. But they used to support me with the money, too. If I

didn't feel the issue was a proper issue, or they were going too far, I'd say no, and they'd get upset and later cool off. I never had that problem.

I suppose part of it was that I really was not that concerned about whether I remained in the Legislature. So it gave me a freedom to do whatever the heck I wanted to do. And some people, of course, are more concerned with staying there, and they worry more and they react more to the funds that come in.

Even Arnie Weinmeister, who used to be head of the Teamsters Union—and I knew him fairly well—I'd say, "You know, Davis is upset with me."

"I don't give a goddamn," he'd say, and he'd write out a check. He didn't care what Joe Davis or anybody else did. He did what he wanted to do. He was an independent sort.

Ms. Boswell: The papers around 1970 or so were full of talk about donations. One of them was, I think, the pinball operators. That seemed to have been a fairly big—if not a scandal, at least a topic of discussion—as to where and how that kind of operation worked.

Mr. Mardesich: It's hard to remember now who represented them.

Ms. Boswell: One of the other issues that I noticed in the paper was, I guess I'd call it a mini-scandal, about the operation of the state liquor board. I think the issue there involved a lot of "breakage" and then it turned out that several of the members of the liquor board were indicted.

Mr. Mardesich: Free liquor?

Ms. Boswell: Yes, and you were head of the Commerce Committee, so therefore you were the one that oversaw a lot of the hearings about that. Was that something important or of interest?

Mr. Mardesich: There was no question that it was an important issue. They admitted that there was a quote, "breakage problem." Breakage became the answer to their hauling around illegal liquor, so they had to write it off, and they called it breakage. I haven't been down there for a long time, but I suspect there's a little of that that still goes on.

Ms. Boswell: At that point in your career, by the time you were in the Senate, what was your favorite, if you had one, committee? Was there one that you were more dedicated to than others?

Mr. Mardesich: I always felt that Ways and Means was the most important. Obviously—it was handling the money. I used to do a lot of studying of the budget and I'd have it in front of me on the table. If it was 1950, I'd have 1949, 1948, 1947, the budgets for the last four or five years laid out there. I cross-examined the director or staff or whoever was there about it, "I noticed that there's a real big increase in this—can you explain it?"

I ran into this problem once. There was a director who couldn't give me the basic answers. "Well, I'll have to ask the staff." You'd get that answer about five times during an hour meeting. My next question was, "What the hell do you do over there?" Because they didn't know anything—they could not give me proper answers. Pathetic—especially when you start asking about increases in the budget, and so on.

Ms. Boswell: So you really did have to ride herd on some of these individuals—department directors or staff?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. And, as I say, I used to keep those budgets around on my desk. I think I was the only one who did it. Kept them right there and cross-examined the staff.

Ms. Boswell: I know that there were a lot of committee assignments and, as you progressed in the Senate, you took on a lot of responsibility. Will you walk me through a typical day? Let's say you're somewhere either in the middle or near the end of the session. What would be a typical day from the time you get up when you were there? First of all, you would live down there, I take it, throughout the session?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, I lived in Olympia.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have your family with you?

Mr. Mardesich: Sometimes, yes. Sometimes they didn't want to come. Some sessions they did, and the kids went to school down there. But there was very little home-time, believe me. They didn't come down that often and that was a reason that I was in contact with so many people more often than I would have been if my family had been here all the time.

Ms. Boswell: Would you normally rent a place just for the session?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. If the family was coming down, I used to rent a home. If they weren't, two or three of us would get together and rent a home. Once in awhile I'd stay in a hotel or at the Tyee.

To start in the morning, I tried to avoid those seven o'clock meetings. There's nothing like getting up at four o'clock in the morning to go fishing, but I don't have to do it when I'm not fishing. I would have meetings scheduled at nine, perhaps.

Ms. Boswell: And those would be primarily the different committees?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. We tried to schedule the meetings for everyone so that the meetings had space and you could come and go. Often you were on two of them and sometimes you'd check the calendar to see what was on for that day, and if it was nothing critical, you wouldn't go.

There would always be someone waiting to visit with you, to talk to you. If you were leader, that was normal. You'd walk in the office and there would be two or three or four people waiting to see you about their issues, their problems. Usually, we went in at ten o'clock to the floor, sometimes later, but that was standard then. That gave them time to hold the meetings in the morning for a couple of hours. And we had meetings in the afternoons and the evenings—once in awhile, we would meet in the evening. I used to do too darn much, really. I'd go back at night after dinner and read until eleven or twelve, sometimes even later. I would do a lot of reading.

It was a long day no matter how you figured it. Go to dinner with someone, and there were a couple of hours down the drain, and then back to reading. Once in awhile you'd goof off and not work at night.

Ms. Boswell: Were there many social opportunities with the other legislators?

Mr. Mardesich: Once in awhile there were caucus get-togethers, parties—Democratic caucus and that kind of thing. The Republicans did it too, and I used to go to theirs once in awhile and needle them, "Just checking up to see who's here."

There were social programs. They'd have dances once in awhile, but most of the social stuff, as far as I was concerned, were with people who had something they wanted to talk to me about.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of your day, when you were in the leadership, I imagine that occupied even more time. You mentioned a lot of behind-the-scenes discussion and meetings before even any bills came out.

Mr. Mardesich: Almost every day. We—especially Hubert Donohue, whose name I mentioned with Ways and Means—we would get two or three of the Democrats in, the key people. And we'd get two or three Republicans in and go over that stuff to save time on the floor, so there wouldn't be a lot of debate. It cuts out a lot of arguments if you do that.

Then they go to their caucus the next day. "Here's what we went over, and does anybody have any questions?" We laid out the calendar and we'd go over it. We'd come on the floor and it would be quite perfunctory most of the time.

Ms. Boswell: When did the caucuses fit in the schedule?

Mr. Mardesich: Sometimes we'd go into session at ten, and we'd fold early. We'd come in at ten, just briefly, call the roll and then go to caucus at ten for an hour. Depending on how much discussion there had to be. We'd come back, do some voting up until noon or twelve-thirty, or whatever it was. Sometimes we'd caucus in the afternoon when we had afternoon sessions. Most of the caucuses would be held in the morning.

Ms. Boswell: Did the process work? Do you feel like it was the most efficient or at least not a bad means of getting government going and getting laws passed?

Mr. Mardesich: Are you talking about the caucuses?

Ms. Boswell: No, I'm talking about the whole system.

Mr. Mardesich: There's only one better form of government and there are certain conditions to that type. If I'm the dictator, that's the best.

It's pretty hard to beat the system in a self-serving way, believe me. You get a lot of input, a lot of different opinions, which you can't have in a lot of places. The chance for discussion exists in this system far more than any other that you can think of. And discussion is good, providing it doesn't go on forever. The more you talk, sometimes, the more problems you create.

Ms. Boswell: Were you a long-winded speaker on the floor when you had a chance to talk for a bill?

Mr. Mardesich: I never did talk that much, really. Once in awhile, or if we got into a debate. Generally speaking, except toward the end when you got so crowded, I had read the stuff and I often had amendments for it. The boys knew that. They often questioned me about the situation with respect to the bill. Every once in awhile, I'd speak.

I remember one day, however, way back when, in the House, toward the end of the session we'd put on the three-minute limit—otherwise too much time was wasted. We had some pretty tough measures, and I was up going into it in detail and talking about it. Someone—from our own side—says, "Three minutes, your honor, in three minutes call Mr. Mardesich down." So I took my watch off and tossed it at him. I eventually calmed down, but it's the last time I had any complaints about how long I spoke.

Most of those were amendments, not full bills. Some bills could be a whole chapter or a whole section of the law. It could be ten or twenty pages long, but there might only be a half dozen amendments in the whole bill. You could thumb through it quite rapidly and see what the changes are. You should be reading the whole to see what further changes you could make. You look at the changes to see what the effect of those changes are. Most bills are like that unless you're on a new subject, and then you have to read the whole darn thing. But most of it you can flip through quite rapidly. And Gissberg would be reading them, too. He was a good legislator.

Ms. Boswell: How long do you think it took to get to that point where you could be a good legislator—where you knew how to work the system and how to get things passed and done?

Mr. Mardesich: You can do it pretty fast, actually. Of course that was a two-year session. I think the third session I was there I became part of the leadership in the House.

Ms. Boswell: In one of the articles about the issues of the state liquor, one newspaper account called you, "The Everett Democrat with a keen sense for publicity." I wondered about that notion of publicity. Did that play a role? Were you a publicity seeker?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't seek publicity. As a matter of fact, I got into a debate with some newspaper types on a couple of occasions. Not over what they were saying about me, but what they were saying generally about other members of the Legislature. I'd get into some real knock-down-drag-outs with some of them on that stuff.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me a little bit about the press corps who covered Olympia.

Mr. Mardesich: Larson. He was a heck of a nice guy. Shelby Scates, also a very nice guy, but also one with whom I tangled. We kicked him off the floor once—not because of me—he was taking pot shots at one of the legislators from Eastern Washington, and I challenged him on it. I asked him to leave, he got lippy, and I ordered him off the floor and had the guards escort him out. He cooled off after awhile. He didn't cool off that day. He came into my office raising heck and so I

personally escorted him out. Being a fisherman and all that, I was in pretty good shape. Shelby speaks to me now, and I see him on rare occasions. But he was the only one I really tangled with strongly.

There weren't that many of them in those days either, way back when. The hallway between the two houses became crowded with lobbyists, newspaper reporters. Have you been down there lately? I'll bet it's still the same. The area between had the phones. Have you been there during sessions? Are the switchboards still out there for the phones?

Ms. Boswell: They moved a lot of the lobbyist phones downstairs to the basement. There's a room with a whole bank of phones there.

Mr. Mardesich: It used to be up above there—a bunch of booths. Over the years you could see that expanding. There used to be not that many newspaper people there. And of those, Shelby Scates and Larson were the best known. They worked for the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle P-I*. That's why they had the status they did.

Ms. Boswell: What about Lyle Burt?

Mr. Mardesich: Lyle Burt was another one.

Ms. Boswell: Adele Ferguson?

Mr. Mardesich: Adele had a sharp pencil. She could cut you up or praise you, whichever. And she did both. Adele wrote for the *Bremerton Sun*.

Ms. Boswell: If you had some information that you wanted to get to the press, or if you wanted your side of the story to be known, who would you go to or how would you do it?

Mr. Mardesich: I never did get that involved. They came to see me once in awhile to talk to me. They'd stop me in the hall, catch me after adjournment right there on the floor. We'd sit around chatting about the stuff. Sometimes after adjournment I'd be still sitting in my seat and there'd be half a dozen around yakking away. Sometimes they'd follow you if you were going building to building—they'd walk along with you. Most of the press that I knew were men, but they were all pretty darn good boys.

Ms. Boswell: So you never had any real problems or disagreements, then?

Mr. Mardesich: I never used to work with them in terms of trying to get anything. Maybe some of that staff of mine did some of that, I suspect. I don't know. As I say, if I had any argument, I'd do it right out there in front of Christ and everyone. What the heck.

Ms. Boswell: There was also a man there from the Associated Press. Was it Bill Mertina? He was there for awhile.

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. I didn't know him that well though. He was there for quite awhile, but I didn't know him well.

Ms. Boswell: How would you assess the role that the state press actually played in politics? Did they play a significant role?

Mr. Mardesich: I suspect so. If they thought ill of someone, they could make him look bad, no question about it. It has its effect, no question about that either. As far as being that significant on whether things got through or not, that never used to bother me. We'd push it if we thought it was good. They'd once in awhile have a point.

Ms. Boswell: Did the press wield a huge amount of influence in Olympia?

Mr. Mardesich: There's no question they have influence. They write the stories and all that. But, as I say, having no great desire to remain in Olympia for a hundred years, it didn't bother me what they said.

Ms. Boswell: Did certain papers have a reputation, be it conservative or liberal or something else, aside from the individual reporters?

Mr. Mardesich: My own reaction at the moment is that I thought the *Seattle Times* was more

conservative than the *Seattle P-I*. I don't know whether I was right or not, but that was the reaction I had.

I suspect that Larson was one of the voices of the *Seattle Times* and Scates was one of the voices of the *Seattle P-I*, the main one. Once in awhile they used to send other guys to the Capitol just to, I guess, keep in touch with what's going on. They'd have someone with them, but they were the ones that were there most of the time.

Ms. Boswell: There was an interesting passage in the oral history with Bob Bailey, in which he says that he was always most amazed by Adele Ferguson, because he would come out of caucus and the next day you'd read about what you did in the caucus. He could never figure out where she was getting her information.

Mr. Mardesich: Adele was a good reporter. I suspect she got the information by talking immediately to people who came out of caucus. Do you suppose somebody who was in there would take the phone off the hook?

Ms. Boswell: Were there people whom you suspected of leaking things to the press that were technically supposed to be private conversations?

Mr. Mardesich: I never got involved in saying that this is something we shouldn't talk about to the press. You knew there were no secrets in Olympia, why fight it? Somebody's going to talk about it, what the heck. It's a waste of time to try to keep something secret, so why worry? Whatever you did was going to get out anyway.

Ms. Boswell: But that wasn't necessarily a common attitude, was it?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know. That's the way I felt about it.

Ms. Boswell: I was thinking, isn't that the same time that there was passage of a measure so that committee hearings and votes had to be public? They opened up the committee votes in the Rules Committee.

Mr. Mardesich: The people weren't screaming—the press was screaming about that, about opening up. I still think it's a mistake. I thought it was a mistake then and I think it is today. A very simple reason. You get the people not voting the way they feel, but the way they think the press or the people want them to vote, and that's not good. I saw it lots of times.

Ms. Boswell: Once that measure went into effect, did people—people being the press or constituents—actually come in and sit through all these hearings?

Mr. Mardesich: Did they come in? You can say that again. Especially the Rules Committee, it used to be packed. And even in all the other committees, people with an interest would come in. Rules was the last committee to be opened.

Ms. Boswell: You didn't believe that it should be open—you believed that it was a better system before?

Mr. Mardesich: During the voting. I felt what they should do was have the hearing, and then excuse everyone while we vote on the issues. There's definitely a tendency, if they're out there—here's Joe Blow representing such-and-such and he wants bill number 365, and he's sitting there looking at you—the tendency is to vote for 365 because he's had the pressure on you or because he gave you a campaign contribution, or he was a friend of yours. Whatever. Whereas, if he's not there, your tendency might be to vote "no," especially if someone called for a written ballot. We'd pass the papers around and we'd vote "yes" or "no."

Ms. Boswell: Again, one of the newspaper people, in talking about that particular measure, said that you least liked it, and called you "jealous of your powers." Were you jealous of your power? Some of these people do definitely have an attitude when you read it. That's why I was really curious about your relations with the press. They get their digs in when they can.

Mr. Mardesich: They get their digs in, sure. I

think one of the things he was talking about—and it was not without some justification—was often there were people who came to me, who had a particular part of a committee and they would want me to take it. "Get that out of my committee, I don't want to fool with that anymore." A committee might have three or four sub-committee parts, names and such. I ended up with more committees than you could shake a stick at because a lot of guys didn't want them. So, I took them.

Then they'd rename a committee once in awhile, broaden the name, and then I would take it over. It caused a time problem trying to get to all those committee meetings and negated for me personally the reduction of the number of committees on which I served.

Ms. Boswell: Although we've talked a little about your ultimate role as majority leader in the Senate, I'd like to talk a little more today about why and how you became interested in becoming majority leader. When did you actually decide that you would try for majority leader?

Mr. Mardesich: It had to be at the very start of the session, that's for darn sure. I don't think it would even have come up if I had not been majority leader in the House and then came over to the Senate.

Greive was there and he was inclined—I thought at least and apparently so did a lot of others—to be very loose about the way the thing was operated.

Ms. Boswell: What do you mean, loose?

Mr. Mardesich: He took care of his friends, which is natural, and the structure—what came out of committees and this and that—was just sort of haphazard.

Actually, I didn't run for it. I didn't want it. Bill Gissberg had run the year before and came within one vote, as I recall, of making it. Then we tried to talk him into running again, and he wouldn't do it, so he stands up and nominates me. That's how I got to be majority leader.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have any personal opposition running against Bob Greive?

Mr. Mardesich: Not particularly. Not personally, no. I did think that he had a tendency to sort of let the place float around at will rather than try to organize it a little more. He had a tendency, which is normal, to take care of his people and give away chairmanships and stuff like that simply to get the votes. So we turned it around and ran his own system against him.

Ms. Boswell: The papers mentioned something that they called the "Mardesich Manifesto," which was a document you drew up, which set forth some of the reforms that you wanted in the Senate and the House. Can you tell me more about how that came about?

Mr. Mardesich: Don't even recall it. What was in it?

Ms. Boswell: I can quote you from it. One of the lines is, "The people's faith in the Legislature and its ability to furnish answers to problems is at an all-time low. A reversal of the legislative image would be of benefit to each member of the Legislature. More importantly, the renewed interest and hope of the people will allow us to rise to the needs of tomorrow by wise action today."

Mr. Mardesich: I wonder who wrote that for me.

Ms. Boswell: So, it doesn't ring any bells?

Mr. Mardesich: I recall it. A part of the problem was, as I say, the thing was sort of just operating on its own. Bob did not really get in and run the thing. He let every committee chairman do whatever he wanted. We organized it so we could move rapidly and get what you wanted in the way of measures through the place.

I still felt that to get something accomplished you had to have a little organization. After I became majority leader, we met quite often, almost every day at the end of the day: six o'clock in the evening, five-thirty, when most of the committee meetings were folding. There would be anywhere from four to six to eight of us there. Not only Democrats, the Republicans as well, talking about what needs to be done. It worked out pretty well

since the Republicans were in on making some of these decisions and bringing up issues that they had high interest in. They were very cooperative. We had very little trouble at any time thereafter in managing the place and getting what we wanted done.

I'm guessing somewhat from what little I've observed that there isn't too much of that even going on now. The give-and-take and the business of trying to set up scheduling programs and all that. Then, if there was something that was of interest, we'd ask the chairman. We'd call him in and say, "What's going on? Where is it? This is an issue of importance to the state."

"Well, we've been doing other stuff."

"Well, get on the ball."

Ms. Boswell: So, you could keep better tabs on everything?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. We did. We had no problem whatsoever in keeping the thing organized, as I say, because we had five or six of the major players in there every night, both on our side and the Republican side. It was bipartisan. "What the heck needs to be done," we'd say, and then we did it.

Ms. Boswell: There were other caucus reforms that were mentioned in this document—one was the elimination of seniority as the determining factor in assigning committee chairs.

Mr. Mardesich: That's what Greive used, primarily. Of course, he had his own boys. As a consequence of that system, theoretically they would stay in, whereas you had some very qualified young people who got nowhere under that system.

Ms. Boswell: Did that change when you took over as majority leader? You didn't use seniority?

Mr. Mardesich: No, we used a number of people who had not been chairmen—moved them into position.

Ms. Boswell: But they were your boys now instead of Greive's boys?

Mr. Mardesich: Primarily. Sure. The same system. Why would I not reward those who supported me? It's that simple. That's what he always did, so we gave him a taste of his own medicine.

Ms. Boswell: Another reform that was mentioned was to open the financial affairs of the caucus to all members. Tell me more about that idea.

Mr. Mardesich: There was an attempt on his part to control the money that came in to various members. Of course, he took care of his friends first. We put a stop to that and let those people who are contributing give to whomever they wished. They'll give to those whom they think are most deserving or those who are most helpful. That's the way it's supposed to be. As I say, we had very little trouble in the operation of the Senate thereafter.

If Greive had tried operating without rules, there would have been a revolution because he could always call on the rules. There was a session when we operated most of the session without rules, because we were thinking of making some changes and I just kept refusing to get into it with him. Finally, I was called on by one of the people, "Where's that in the rules?"

I said, "We're now operating under Mardesich rules, not *Robert's Rules of Order*."

That brought the place down. But we did operate a lot of times, naturally, under the ordinary rules anyway. There was no complaining to speak of. I know it was mostly a needle I was getting rather than a question. I tended to allow people to speak and to do anything they wanted as long as it was not holding things up, and as long as they were sincere about their positions.

Ms. Boswell: What about the Greive fund, as it was called? Was that a legitimate enterprise or not?

Mr. Mardesich: It was legitimate from his point of view. Naturally, that's what he used to get people to support him. Those people supported him at reelection time. And he kept the seniority system, because once they were his people and in positions of power as committee chairmen, he had

them in his pocket, generally speaking. So we ran it a little differently thereafter.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that if people had asked, he would have spread the money around that he had collected to any legislator?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose if people had asked him, he might have. But he did all that on his own, by himself. To those of us who were on the other side, at least Gissberg, Donohue, and I, and the rest of them, we didn't need his money. So it meant nothing to us.

Ms. Boswell: But you did—I don't know if I would say in retaliation—raise your own funds, at least that first year of the fight over the majority leader position, didn't you?

Mr. Mardesich: We raised money and didn't particularly make it a point to distribute it on the basis of who supports you. We did raise funds, and generally speaking—I don't care what anybody says—it was without putting the heat on people. "You have to measure up" or "I support the caucus"—we didn't pull that stuff. It was on the level.

Ms. Boswell: Who would donate to that kind of a fund?

Mr. Mardesich: We made the point that they donated primarily to individuals. There was no "Mardesich fund" as such, as there was the "Greive fund." There wasn't. I usually ended up with more money than I needed, and I'd give it to people who I felt were qualified and who weren't getting it. But, as I say, Gissberg had no problem raising money. Hubert Donohue had no problem raising money. Others in that early class had no problem raising money, so we didn't worry too much about what he did. We raised our own. As I say, if it was more than we needed as individuals, we'd very often help others. Just who needs it, we'd give it to them.

I'll admit, when it came time to reorganize the thing, I was of course partial to those who had been supportive. There was a tendency to try to leave people where they had been.

One thing Greive had done was increase the size of Rules. Almost every session if he needed another vote, he'd get another man and get him on Rules. Pretty soon the Rules Committee had seventeen members on it. Half the Democratic caucus was on the Rules Committee. So I put a change to that. We lowered the number, I think, the first session to nine, which put Greive's people in a state of shock. I mean literally, some of them were in tears.

We also cut down on a number of committees. Not because we were trying to cut them out of committees, but it got so how do you meet the scheduling? You can't. You're missing meetings all the time. So that's one reason we cut down the number of committees and set up scheduling so that a guy who's working had an opportunity, with rare exception, to make his meetings without conflict with another committee meeting. There was always some conflict—you can't avoid it—but it wasn't like before. I think that was as important a change as we made. The people could get to their meetings and get involved in the debate and all the rest of it.

Ms. Boswell: Did you really believe what it says here, that by changing the legislative process that it would really affect voters, or that it would somehow give the Legislature a better reputation?

Mr. Mardesich: I always have felt that if the people know enough about what's going on, they'll respond. I don't think they know enough about what's going on today, either at a national or state level.

I think especially on the national level the average guy doesn't know what's going on. If you keep people informed, they will have a tendency to stop and think and do the right thing. I don't care what anybody says. If you give them the information, generally the reaction will be right. But if you just keep them in the dark—you know. You don't even have to do it on purpose. If you don't broadcast enough about what you're doing, the word doesn't get out to the public.

We used to try to be very broad in allowing people to speak. We'd have meetings that would run, sometimes, for hours when so many people wanted to speak. So we ran them. We'd come for

a five o'clock meeting, a four-thirty meeting, we'd sometimes be there until nine o'clock because people wanted to speak. So let them speak. Some of the guys would bitch and moan, and we'd say, "Relax. We'll take care of you. We'll see that somebody gets your dinner, or we'll go somewhere after the meeting for dinner, the whole bunch of us." And we did, and not everybody did go, but a lot of us did. So, it worked.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about the people who supported you in this particular effort. There's a long list of people who signed this Mardesich Manifesto. I'm going to read you their names, and I want you to comment about it: Bob Bailey, Gordon Walgren, Martin Durkan, Gordon Sandison, Hubert Donohue, James Keefe, Al Henry, William S. Day, Lowell Peterson, Gary Odegaard, Ted Bottiger, and Daniel Marsh.

Mr. Mardesich: These were most of the newer people in the Senate at the time. Sandison had been in the House. Most of those boys had been in the House with me. Some of them had preceded me to the Senate. Some came over shortly thereafter.

Sandison, Gissberg, and those people had what it took up there in the head. It was very easy for them to adapt to what the problems were and work with them. They were a good bunch of people.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me a little more about Martin Durkan whose name is associated both with this effort and then later with other efforts to make changes. Tell me a little more about him and your relationship.

Mr. Mardesich: Martin was even. When I got there, he was on Ways and Means and working to be chairman of Ways and Means. Martin's interest was not only in the Legislature and the Senate itself; he was interested in becoming governor, and had that in mind, and knew that the leader of the budget or taxing committee was a high profile position. That's why he worked to get it and worked at it. Simply because, I'm sure, he thought it was a stepping-stone. And it probably was. He came close to making it.

Bob Bailey was one who was a Greive man all those years. Only, number one, he saw the handwriting on the wall and, and number two, I think he felt disturbed by what he saw, so he came over and joined us. He was one of the old-timers.

Ms. Boswell: What about Gordon Walgren?

Mr. Mardesich: Walgren hadn't been there too long, either. But he also was a sharp one. Most of those guys had some gray matter and they were good operators.

Ms. Boswell: I noticed that in that list of people you have a fair number of people who are from Eastern Washington or at least the eastern side of the mountains. You have a couple of Spokanites—Bill Day and James Keefe. Tell me about how you were able to bridge that barrier.

Mr. Mardesich: Keefe was one of Greive's boys over the years too, but he didn't like him personally. He came over and his concern was simply that he didn't want to get chopped up. He was a very friendly type, too, a jovial fellow. So I asked, "Why would we chop you up? If you come over, we won't dare chop you up because we'll be close enough, even if we don't win, that he won't dare fool around anymore. Greive could try to cut you up one way or another through assignment of bills to a particular committees where he can try to control and all that."

But we had enough votes, and if I needed a few votes on the Republican side, it was simple to get them because they had no love for Greive. If I needed five votes, all I'd do is look over there at Atwood, Matson, one of those guys, and catch their eye. I knew how many I had, and maybe I only needed three, but I'd say five so we'd have an edge, and they'd just nod and get up and they'd just line up their five votes. So it was no great problem running the place.

A lot of those people from the east side of the mountains had been left out by Greive, I think primarily because he was closer to the people on this side. I think he saw more of them.

Ms. Boswell: What about Bill Day?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, I was just going to say that

Daddy Day was also interested in the long haul. He was interested in higher political office, although he never really admitted too much about that, but he was. He, again, was a sharp one. He ran his own show a little more closely than some of the others did.

Bill Day became Speaker of the House at one time under the Republicans. He lined up all the Republicans and they voted him into the Speakership. When he came over to the Senate, he had interest in moving up there very quickly too, and he just figured out that we were the ones who were eventually going to be running it, and he joined us.

Ms. Boswell: There was some speculation in the newspaper that he hoped to be the compromise candidate. If you or Greive didn't get it, that he would be the one that would get it.

Mr. Mardesich: I don't have any doubts that he thought that way. That may have been speculation, but it was pretty well based—those people who knew him. Yes, he was interested in moving up the ladder. I suspect he also had a hankering to be governor. No doubt about that.

Ms. Boswell: There were a few interesting people who decided not to sign—who stayed undecided, I guess I should say. Those people included Gary Grant, Booth Gardner, Pete Francis, George Fleming, and Joe Stortini. Tell me a little about the undecided.

Mr. Mardesich: We didn't worry too much about them, because by that time I thought that Gissberg was going to be the new majority leader. We had done enough talking about it. The boys were ready for the revolution. Some of those boys didn't join us because I think some of them were not sure how this was going to go. We knew we had the votes, and as it became apparent, they quickly joined us without exception.

Gary Grant was more of an individual type, anyway. He always was out on his own, swinging his own ax. He was that way all the time I knew him.

Ms. Boswell: What about Booth Gardner at this time? He didn't stay in the Legislature very long, right?

Mr. Mardesich: Booth was, at the time, relatively new to it all. I didn't know him hardly at all. No one knew him that well, on our side at least, because he had just come over. But he quickly joined the club. There's another guy who did his homework.

Ms. Boswell: Is there any significance to the fact that many of the people who held out were the city senators from Tacoma or Seattle?

Mr. Mardesich: There was some of that—always was and always will be. I don't have any doubt that they tried to organize it to control the Seattle-Tacoma area and so on. There's some logic to their position in doing so.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me why.

Mr. Mardesich: They can get things done for their areas. When it comes to dividing the billions of dollars, why we take care of Seattle and Tacoma. Enough of them. That's one of the reasons why if you get all the countryside, it becomes a real battle. Then again, of course, we had Snohomish County because we were here.

And the boys to the north joined because they knew us better—Lowell Peterson and the rest of them. Frank Atwood from up in Bellingham. Republican, but nevertheless, he saw which way it was going. They had, as I said earlier, a real dislike for Greive and the way he operated the place. They were more used to real organization and all that. Democrats have always been somewhat disorganized. You're aware of that, aren't you?

Ms. Boswell: I think I've heard about that before.

Mr. Mardesich: They were that way, and the Republicans, I think, appreciated the fact that we were organizing the place a little better and setting up a structure. "This is the way it's going to be, and we're not going to have you on seven committees so you can't make the meetings. You're going to be on four." Very rarely did we issue more than four

committees to a person—some, but most of the time not. We cut down on the number of committees just because of that reason.

They overloaded me. When we cut down on some of the committees, they kept forcing them into my bailiwick where I ended up with them. The committee that had about six subcommittees in it. But there was a logic to that, too. They wanted more control.

Ms. Boswell: One person who actually didn't end up supporting your efforts, which surprised me, was Slim Rasmussen. I wondered about that.

Mr. Mardesich: Slim was a very independent sort, and I really don't know why. I think simply because he had been one of Greive's boys. Slim was very independent.

Ms. Boswell: But he's the one who had gotten up and challenged Greive many years earlier, in the 1950s.

Mr. Mardesich: As I say, he was a very independent sort. He didn't care whether it was Augie or Greive, or who in the heck it was. He had his own tune to march by, and he did.

Ms. Boswell: Later, he seemed to ally himself with Greive, when you took over? Is that fair to say?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think particularly. After we got into power, we had very little problem. No one was arguing because we tried to take care of everyone. We had to lay the wood to some of Greive's old-timers, a number of them. We had too many committees and they were on Rules and every other darn thing. Reuben Knoblauch was one of those. He broke down in tears when he found out he was no longer going to be on Rules. Literally. I don't know why it was important to him, but he did. But we had to cut it from seventeen to nine, so somebody had to go.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think the addition of Bob Bailey to your camp was a turning point in terms of swaying the undecided people?

Mr. Mardesich: That undoubtedly had some effect. When some of those boys saw that Bob Bailey was coming over, it undoubtedly had its effect.

Bob was cautious in many ways. I'll never forget when we did a restructuring of the state pension system—I led that battle because I could see where it was taking the state in terms of indebtedness. I got up and made a speech on what we were doing and all that, and Bailey cross-examined the living bejesus out of me. "Are you sure about this, are you sure about that?" Simply because he wanted to know for sure. I think that, in effect, he may have agreed with what we were doing and was trying to spread the word to the boys: okay. He cross-examined me on the floor during a session for three-quarters of an hour. He was a good head and a solid character. When he told you he was going to do something, there was no need to worry about it. He did it. If he was with you, he was with you. Some people tell you they're with you and they end up voting against you. Ridiculous, but they did.

Ms. Boswell: I wanted to read you a quote from a newsman, Richard Larson, about this manifesto and about the notion of reform. He said, "Listening to Mardesich and Walgren espouse reform, some newsmen felt as though they were hearing a W.C. Fields temperance lecture. The two senators have been involved in a lot of hipper-dipper action in the Senate, but not much of it has to do with reform."

I ask for your response to that. Is that a personal take of Richard Larson?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know what exactly he might be talking about. When you're new, you come over and you take care of your people, people that you know. If the issue is something that is tolerable and doesn't hurt the state and is good for the state, what the heck? We do a lot of flipping around from subject to subject, that's probably what he was talking about.

Ms. Boswell: The hipper-dipper?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes. Later, he became very, very friendly.

Ms. Boswell: What actually happened during the caucus? I would like to pretend that I'm a fly on the wall and have you describe to me exactly what was going on in that caucus when this big change and vote came about.

Mr. Mardesich: Some of them nominated Greive, and Gissberg nominated Mardesich and that brought everything else to a screeching halt. They passed out little slips of paper about two by three inches and everybody's doing this, folding them and passing them in. Then they just count the votes. It's that simple.

Ms. Boswell: There's no discussion?

Mr. Mardesich: No. By that stage of the operation the boys have pretty well made their minds up, and there was no great debate about it at all.

Ms. Boswell: The caucus leader, Bob Bailey, would be running the election, right?

Mr. Mardesich: Right.

Ms. Boswell: So, everybody votes on their piece of paper and then what happens?

Mr. Mardesich: They count them. Somebody at the head table sits up there and counts them.

Ms. Boswell: And you were pretty sure you had the votes before you went into this meeting?

Mr. Mardesich: We were quite certain, yes. Sandison was a tough, forceful character. He was very convincing with the others.

Bob Bailey worked me over for an endless amount of time—reform of the pension system. It was a very hot issue. We fussed with that thing for three years to finally get something done. Everybody recognized the political dangers in it all, all the public employees, the firemen, the policemen and everybody else. But he cross-examined me to no end on that stuff. He then said, "All right, I'm with you." He sat down and that was the end of it.

Ms. Boswell: What was Bob Greive's immediate reaction to the change in leadership? Do you remember?

Mr. Mardesich: He didn't say too much. At least he didn't to me. I don't know whether he sounded off somewhere else. He became very quiet and said very little on the floor.

Ms. Boswell: In a few articles, Senator Greive said that he essentially didn't really care or that he really didn't campaign. He said the position of the leadership wasn't that important to him. Did you agree with that?

Mr. Mardesich: I do not agree with that. I think it was extremely important to him. I think he cared, but he didn't want to show it. I have no doubt that he cared.

One of the reasons he got beat was because he was all over the place half the time. Not really running, and not really organizing things at all.

Ms. Boswell: When you say he didn't handle it, why would he want that position? What would he get out of it?

Mr. Mardesich: Name, name. That's my opinion. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think there was any other reason for it.

Ms. Boswell: Did he have certain programs or projects that he focused on?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think I ever saw him focusing too much on any subject matter.

Ms. Boswell: What about redistricting?

Mr. Mardesich: There's one he focused on all the time—which was again an attempt to take care of his own votes. Just twist the shape like this. That was his big thing. We took him on that one, too.

Ms. Boswell: There were some charges made by Senator Greive, and possibly others, that you wanted in not because of reform, but because of gambling legislation. This position would supposedly allow you to push through some programs of the pinball and cardroom operators.

What was your response to that charge?

Mr. Mardesich: I ignored it because it was of no consequence, and it was BS. I had no connection with those people, the gambling people. No consequence at all.

Ms. Boswell: There was some indication that a bill favorable to them had gone through endorsed by you in the previous year.

Mr. Mardesich: Could be. I don't know what the bill was. If you tell me what it was, I could explain it.

Ms. Boswell: I don't know more than that there was supposed to have been a bill supportive of interests of the pinball people.

Mr. Mardesich: If there was gambling involved in the measure—which no doubt there was or it wouldn't have come up—I have no great feeling about the gambling business anyway. My position has been very simple: it should be kept on a low level. Period. I think it's getting bigger and bigger and bigger by the day. The Indian tribes are going to end up with a problem on their hands before too many years as a consequence of it.

Ms. Boswell: One of the first things that happened was that Greive was removed from the Rules Committee. Was that retribution or was that something else?

Mr. Mardesich: No. You can have only so many people that are sitting around making decisions. You don't need him there trying to protect his people. Period. It's that simple. We took care of a lot of his people. We figured that we don't need him around. Wouldn't you do the same thing?

Ms. Boswell: I've never been in that position, so I won't answer that.

There was a note in one of the newspapers that suggested, in relation to the gambling, that you suggested that perhaps you would set up a select committee on gambling and make Senator Greive the chairman of it. It sounded like you were trying to poke him a little.

Mr. Mardesich: I needled him a little bit. He made comments about the gambling, so what the heck, give it back to him. I never had any great animosity for Greive. I never did particularly like him, either. I thought he was—I shouldn't say zero—but he was not high up on the ladder as far as I was concerned. He was not strong or really felt that strongly about positions, not like some of us. But I didn't worry too much about him one way or the other.

Ms. Boswell: One of the things you said after the election that interested me, you said, "I am not in this position to be magnanimous, but I try to run a good ship. I don't intend to be vindictive, but to be fair."

Mr. Mardesich: And thus it ended.

Ms. Boswell: Was that fair?

Mr. Mardesich: About Bob? It may not have been fair to him, but he'd just lost. But as I say, we took care of a lot of people that were on his side as well. We kept some of them as chairmen and all that. We didn't just throw them all out the door.

I don't have any doubt but that we could have. We were in a position to do so because we had that relationship with the Republicans where we went through these issues well before Greive was ever out. We used to meet with them on some issues to be fair. This was before Greive was ever ousted. These people were there trying to make decisions.

But he could call the shots on occasion by telling his people that had supported him. That's one of the reasons we took him out.

Ms. Boswell: He had been majority leader for fifteen years.

Mr. Mardesich: Was it that long?

Ms. Boswell: Yes. He'd been majority leader since 1957, and this was 1972, so it was fifteen years or close to it. It sounds like there was really a dynamic of newcomers versus the old-line Democrats.

Mr. Mardesich: He made it a point to keep his people happy by keeping them in positions of

authority—committee heads. And he expanded that Rules Committee about every session by one person, two persons. So he had seventeen people on the Rules Committee at one time, and it became unwieldy.

In Rules you did a lot more, especially in those days. There was a lot more open debate than you got in most committees, because it was that "the danged thing is going on the floor." We used to have a lot more debate in the Rules in the old days. I'm sure that now that's changed because they have open meetings.

Ms. Boswell: What about some of the procedural reforms that you wanted? If Senator Greive had wanted to keep his position, why didn't he just agree to make some of the changes? Was he approached?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't approach him. I don't know if anyone else did, no. My feeling was very simple: he's out—we don't need him. He's getting in our hair. And we did it. We kept him on Rules in 1972, which was quite a concession.

Ms. Boswell: Once this changeover had happened, besides the streamlining of some of the committees and the new approach to openness in terms of caucus operation in the Senate, aside from those mechanical or procedural changes, was it a new era under Mardesich? Did other things change, too? Did you bring other kinds of new approaches to the job?

Mr. Mardesich: Not too many. No. But I'll tell you we were willing to take on any issue. It didn't bother us whether it was a bad one, publicity-wise, or a good one. And we did make some changes—absolutely. Tough decisions.

One of them was the public pension system. That was a tough row to hoe. A lot of people were frightened of it. A lot of the legislators were afraid to get involved. But we did it. Had I been there a little longer, I would have done even more. We did only the public employees. We didn't really do the fire or the police, and they should have been done.

It's funny this comes up. We have sort of a bull session down in Jack Sherin's restaurant every day, or every other day or whatever, and just today someone was remarking about the firemen and the policemen, especially the firemen. They said—and I can't believe that's correct—that they only have to put in twenty years now to get their full retirement.

What really started me on reform of the system—after I'd finished the public employees, I started to look at theirs—there's a policeman in Seattle who broke his finger and he said that it was stiff and he got a full retirement disability pension. He claimed his finger was really stiff, and that it was his trigger-finger, which might subject him to a very dangerous condition. That's what really blew me out of the water. That's one of the reasons the police and the firemen, primarily the firemen, took off after me thereafter, because I had made some comments about it.

I knew that if I took on everybody at once there would be just that much more opposition. So we did the public employees first, because that was the largest system and because it had more of a deficit—more shortage in financing. I took that one on first, of course, because there were even at that time some 60,000 public employees. I was just dabbling in the police and fire, just getting information together. This guy was a Seattle policeman with a bad finger, he said. Don't ask me if it was. He broke it and claimed it was stiff.

But he wasn't the only one. There were any number of them. There was a police officer from over here in the sticks somewhere, who after he got on the police force, suddenly he was saying, "I'm sitting in that police car all day; it's just killing me. My back is ruined." He retired. Three-quarters pay for the rest of his life, and we're still paying for it today.

Ms. Boswell: You said "we" in this case. Were there others in particular who were really supportive of the pension reform?

Mr. Mardesich: By "we" I'm referring to the taxpayers. Without doubt, it wasn't everyone who understood there were problems. Many recognized the problem, but they were fearful of the consequences. What the heck, the public employees took off after Augie, huh?

At that time—even then—I took the position

with the people who were involved in my campaign that we ought to take them on. Go right out there and say, "Here's what we did and here's why we did it." Well, you're just going to mix it up more. I still think it was a mistake. If you go out there and tell them, there'd have been a reaction even worse. Why are you doing what you're doing? The average guy in the mill doesn't get that kind of stuff. He's got to work thirty years and he's lucky if he gets fifty percent, even with Social Security.

At that time the fire and police didn't have a Social Security system. So the boys that were working on the outside to get their Social Security, they got an increase in their pension systems, a higher percentage, because they were not on the Social Security system. After they got the other system and they got the higher pensions, then they went out and looked for other jobs in the off-times to get not only this greater pension, but then they got Social Security on top of it. So they ended up with a hell of a good deal, a lot of them did.

Ms. Boswell: Did many of these abuses occur because of lack of leadership of the administrators of the pension system?

Mr. Mardesich: That's part of it. But I still think that was part of what Greive's position was to help those boys, because they would help him get these people reelected. I don't think he was the only one. I think that it was also the public employee groups really working the system.

The time when I got beat, they came up to this district, the Thirty-eighth District, twenty-five busloads of them to campaign against me the last week of the election. Twenty-five busloads going door-to-door in little old Everett. That's when I told my boys, "Hell, we ought to just take them on and find out what they're getting and why." It was a mistake I made.

Ms. Boswell: One thing that was raised when you were majority leader was the plan for a yearly sixty-day session of the Legislature. Tell me a little more about how that evolved.

Mr. Mardesich: It evolved because it became apparent that there were 3,000, 3,500, or 4,000 bills being introduced. There were a lot of people screaming for adjustments in the next odd year—budget adjustments, primarily. And the governor would call us back even though it was for a short session. That evolved into: it's an annual budget. You pass it on a two-year basis, but you come back to make the adjustments in the next one. It went from there into thirty and sixty days and it became an every year deal. That's how it happened, adjustments to the budget.

Shortages would show up somewhere naturally, as the economy changes. As the mix of things changed, you've got a shortage here, a shortage there. It depends on the economy. It might be up or it might be down, income may not be coming in. You may be ending up with a surplus and people are out there to grab some of that surplus. It's tough. But once you had a surplus, oh my, they got real excited about it.

Although—we did reduce some of the deficit when I was running it. I don't think it's happened before or since, but we did make some reductions in the deficit.

Ms. Boswell: Had this notion of having a yearly session been hotly debated before? Was this something that you really preferred?

Mr. Mardesich: It just evolved as a consequence of the governor seeing something out of whack and calling us down to Olympia. We'd go down sometimes for a week. Next time it was two weeks, and two years later it was four weeks. It just grew that way. Once you were there a month and a half, "Well, we better make it a regular." Then there was this monkey business of not knowing whether you're going to be there ten, twenty or fifty days. We did it so that we know where we're going to be. That's the way it evolved—little by little. The governors had problems they wanted to solve. People were putting pressure on them, so they'd call a special session.

Ms. Boswell: Did it all trace back to the growth of the state?

Mr. Mardesich: Some of it did, sure. I don't think there was that much of it, although undoubtedly some of it was. You had what, 400,000 or 500,000

new people in the state in the last ten years? It would probably have its effect, huh?

County employment here has grown very rapidly, especially in this county, because they say that the population increased. But they overlooked one thing. As the population has increased, the cities have expanded their boundaries. Edmonds, Everett, Lynnwood, they've all grown together. Everett has extended its boundaries south; Lynnwood has come both north and south, and Edmonds has gone north and south down to the county line. It's coming up and now they're in a bind because we have no more space. I'm wondering, in effect, whether the county population under the county government has grown as much as they claim, because so many people have been absorbed into the cities. I haven't checked it, but I have extreme doubt that the growth in the county areas is as high as to warrant what changes have been made in county employment. There are some 2,000 employees in this county now? I think it's 2,000. It's way up there, I know.

Ms. Boswell: You're talking about Snohomish County?

Mr. Mardesich: I'm talking about Snohomish County. All I'm saying is, I wonder what they're screaming about: "We need more employees, we need more sheriffs, we need a lot more," when the cities have taken over half the county area.

Marysville, they want to expand it. Every city in this place has expanded its population, its area, so I'm wondering whether the growth in the population in the unincorporated area is really what they're claiming. Such that it would now require more employees, more police, more firemen, sheriffs, and so on. I don't know, but I have a real doubt in my mind that it's as bad as they say.

But that's the problem with government all the time. It grows. It very rarely shrinks. If you read the newspapers today, you think, by golly, there's strength in the government. If you look at that, isn't that the impression that is left? It isn't shrinking, it's growing, but it's not growing as rapidly. It's that simple. It's not shrinking, and yet you get that feeling out of the press that, by golly, they're getting together and cutting government. Cutting, my eye. They're just not increasing it as fast as it was increasing. That's what makes the deficits.

Ms. Boswell: Talking about the press, did you have a different relationship with the press once you became majority leader? Was there any difference in the way you were treated or perceived?

Mr. Mardesich: No, I don't know that there was particularly.

Ms. Boswell: I wanted to get your responses to a few newspaper descriptions of you during this period, around 1972. One said that you had "a stubborn streak equal to that of Dan Evans." Tell me about that.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. I suppose I do have a stubborn streak. Part of that is from the way I was brought up in the fishing business. You've got to do what you figure is best and you do it. Period. If it turns out wrong, you put in more hours to get the doggone job done. If you tear your net, by god, you work all night, and the guys would get upset with me. But I said, "Hey, if you don't like it, there's the door." But that was part of that. I think that it comes from the nature of that fishing game. You have to be an independent son-of-a-gun. A lot of strange things can happen out there, and you have to take the bull by the horns and shake the heck out of it.

Ms. Boswell: Would you call yourself "a sharp operator?"

Mr. Mardesich: Sharp? No, I'm not a sharp operator. I'm a very mild-mannered guy. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever use "salty language?" I've read several articles which referred to your salty language.

Mr. Mardesich: I think that comes as a consequence of being on the fishing boat. It sort of sticks with you.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have "an appetite for retaliation?"

Mr. Mardesich: An appetite for retaliation? Well, I would assume that if you're going to talk about Greive now—why did I not put him on this, that and the other committee, and bring him in and let him help—that's some retaliation there, no question about that.

And Reuben Knoblauch might indicate that he felt I was somewhat retaliatory in ways. He didn't come along, after he told me he was going to a number of times, so I dumped him off Rules.

Two things you accomplish with some of that. Some of it has to be, but it gives the message: "Hey, don't fuss with it."

Ms. Boswell: Is that politics, if you had to define what practical politics is?

Mr. Mardesich: That's the way it works. You bet it is. A darn good part of it. As I say, Reuben learned a lesson, but I did it right there on the floor. There was dead silence, but the message gets across. It's a really simple message: "Don't screw around with him because you're liable to get it." It was nothing except one of the times he told me he was going to do something and then did exactly the opposite without even telling me. So I just took him on the floor and dumped him off Rules. Oh, my! But, as I say, it makes the message quite clear. "You tell Augie one thing and then do another, boy, you've got big problems." You have less trouble that way by far. But then, it's different at home. My wife beats me up every other day.

Ms. Boswell: Are you "a mystery man?" I read you described as being the mystery man around the Senate. Why?

Mr. Mardesich: I'll tell you why I think people said that. I think it's because I didn't talk too much, really. People would come to me with this, that, or the other and I wouldn't give an answer. I didn't. I'm absorbing what the problem is without giving them an answer, and they assumed that I was being mysterious, when all I'm doing is trying to absorb it. That happened and part of the problem was that people made assumptions without asking me a direct question. I was very inclined to be non-responsive, unless I knew what the answer was or had a very strong belief about here's what the answer is, and then I would argue it.

I didn't even argue on the floor too often, except when people like Bailey took me on out there. He wasn't taking me on, he was just cross-examining me.

Ms. Boswell: It wasn't a conscious effort to keep people guessing about what you thought?

Mr. Mardesich: No, no, no.

Ms. Boswell: Here's one more I want to throw out. What about "a political pragmatist?" Would you call yourself that?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't even know what it is. What does it mean? If it means that I felt certain things and reacted to those things; everybody does that.

Larson wrote very lightly of me when I first went in but he never caught me lying to him or trying to mislead him. Later, we became very friendly, very friendly, and he thanked me for it.

Shelby Scates, I literally kicked him in the butt, but he still spoke to me and admitted that he shouldn't have made those comments about Jimmy Keefe without really knowing whether they were right. I knew some of them were wrong.

Ms. Boswell: What about "an astute strategist?" Do you plan in a long-term way?

Mr. Mardesich: No, I don't really do much long-term planning. Unfortunately, it's one of my failings in business.

Ms. Boswell: In the Legislature, you didn't see yourself as a strategist?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose. Sure, yes, you have to be to a certain extent. "How are you going to get around that bunch over there? What about these guys?" You have to slide back and forth. You have to do some of that, no question about it.

It's the same in fishing. There are thirty boats

surrounding you and everybody is trying to figure out where to go and what to do and how to set and the rest of it. It's the same thing. You've got to feint now and then, speed up and head for a place, and then just go somewhere else. Pretty soon, they don't know whether you're just crazy or not. Literally. It's a good way to have them thinking, because they're very hesitant then about fighting with you on the fishing grounds. I mean it.

I once rammed a boat because I was in the right according to the law. He kept coming and I just rammed him. Oh, my, he got excited. But the word was around: "That crazy Augie—he's nuts."

Ms. Boswell: He never got in your way again?

Mr. Mardesich: No. It's the business of where you're setting your net. I was setting my net and three-quarters of it was already in the water, and this guy comes and sets right inside of me, so I can't even go back to my other end. I've got to pick it all up over the stern. I slowed down and he comes toward me, and I cut toward the other end of my net and just rammed him. Oh, he got excited. "We'll find out who was in the right, you or I."

We went to my insurance company, but they didn't do a damn thing about it. You're not supposed to go right inside of a guy's net.

Ms. Boswell: I wanted to ask you about your relationships with labor. I wondered about Joe Davis, in particular. As a Democrat, I'm interested in your position on labor and why you had trouble with labor. What happened with labor?

Mr. Mardesich: It was a very simple thing. Joe and his people would come in and say, "This is what you're supposed to do."

I'd reply, "No, you don't understand the legislative process. What I'm supposed to do is what I think I should do after I review the subject, not what you want me to do."

Of course that led to more confrontation between us, although I voted for as many labor bills as most people. But if they were out of line, I voted against them.

He didn't like that. Even when I see him now once in a great while, he gets a big laugh out of it all. He's still very friendly. It wasn't that serious.

Ms. Boswell: Were there any particular issues where you really did differ from Davis?

Mr. Mardesich: It was just that I felt that you don't get everything you want in this business. And you shouldn't. Otherwise you're running the show and the government isn't.

I got along with other labor leaders. Who was the head of the Teamsters then? Arnie Weinmeister, I think. I used to get along with those people very well. They even agreed with me on some of the issues: "Do what you want; that's the way we feel." And I got along with them. It was just that Joe and I initially got off on the wrong foot.

Ms. Boswell: Are you saying that with him it was more of a personality issue?

Mr. Mardesich: I think Joe felt that he could tell anyone what they should do. And I didn't feel that was the way it worked. And it didn't.

Ms. Boswell: When you were running for election, how important was labor's endorsement? I know they didn't give you an endorsement in 1974.

Mr. Mardesich: Labor didn't endorse me at that time. I suspect it was probably because Joe and I were at odds. I didn't think that it was that important anyway. I used to go down to the Labor Temple and make a speech and let everyone cross-examine me. I'd give them the answers and why: one, two, three, and four. I got along with lots of them very well.

Ms. Boswell: Did Dave Beck ever get involved with lobbying in the state Legislature?

Mr. Mardesich: Very rarely. He would come down on very rare occasions. Again, that was early on when I was first down there. I never got in any hassles with him. He also would sit down and talk. As I say, that was when I was first down there.

Ms. Boswell: I was just curious if he did much lobbying.

Mr. Mardesich: He didn't do much in any event.

CHAPTER 9

LAST YEARS IN THE SENATE

Ms. Boswell: In your 1974 reelection campaign, you ran against a man named John Nance Garner. Tell me about him and that race. Was that a more difficult race than you had faced in the past?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know that it was particularly any more difficult. I never did get that deeply involved in running, you know. I used to catch heck from the political insiders and all that. "You've got to get out and work." It didn't bother me. If I got licked, fine; if I didn't, fine. What difference does it make? I didn't need the job. The only reason I got it was because my brother had been there before and was killed, and I was appointed. Otherwise, I would have never been involved in the darn thing. It didn't bother me at all. I enjoyed it. And I generally got along with most of the people—lobbyists, labor, business people. I didn't have any great problems, at least that I was aware of. Maybe they thought I was a problem.

Ms. Boswell: Talking about getting along with people, what about the governor's office? There were some things in the papers in 1974 about you and your involvement with the governor's office.

Mr. Mardesich: Who was governor then, Dan Evans?

Ms. Boswell: Yes. And you were sort of blasting him at the time for his vetoing bills. You called it "the dictatorship of Dan Evans." Was that just posturing?

Mr. Mardesich: Just to needle him. Actually, Dan and I, I believe, got along quite well. He was in the House when I was. He was the House Republican floor leader and I was the Democratic floor leader. We knew each other quite well and we used to needle each other across the aisle and all that sort of thing. But when he got to be governor, I didn't have any great problem with him at all. One thing I can say is that if Dan said he'd do something, he did it.

He would say, "Well, I'd like this bill, I'd like this bill, I'd like this bill."

And I'd say, "We would like you to sign this bill, sign this bill, sign this bill."

I never had him break his word. Never. I can't say the same for some of the others. Dan, when he told you he would do something, it got done. Once he called me up and said, "Man, you sure took me to the cleaners on that one." But he kept his word.

Ms. Boswell: Partisanship wasn't really much of a factor?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Not at all. I got along with him. I've never talked to him about it, but I think that he would say the same.

Ms. Boswell: One of the things that came up as a result of your taking over the job of majority leader from Bob Greive, was an accusation about campaign funds and campaign financing. First of all, once you became majority leader, were there a lot of bad feelings between you and Senator Greive? Was that an issue in your mind?

Mr. Mardesich: Not particularly, although I never did have much feeling for Bob Greive. He was to me very—he's still kicking so I maybe shouldn't say too much—but Bob was sort of "where the water flows easiest" type of stuff. Other senators were trying to get rid of him for some time.

Ms. Boswell: Did Bob Greive blame you?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose he did. I don't know. I never felt close to him either before or since, for that matter. I didn't feel he was that effective at all. Most of the people didn't give a damn what

he said or did. He had a group of ten or fifteen of them who went right down the line with him. But the others did what they wanted to, not what he told them to do.

Ms. Boswell: What about a man named George Martonik? I guess he was a senate clerk. He was involved at one time with the garbage haulers, and he brought up an accusation that they had paid you money for "favors." Can you tell me about that?

Mr. Mardesich: The only thing they ever gave me money for was campaigns. Nothing else. There were hundreds of people who did that and lots of groups who did it. He must have been Greive's boy.

Ms. Boswell: I think he was associated with Bob.

Mr. Mardesich: That's probably what prompted the statement, too. I don't remember the guy. I don't even remember what he looks like at the moment. That never bothered me. It wasn't that big a deal, anyway. I didn't worry too much about what people said about me.

Ms. Boswell: That particular case resulted in a federal indictment.

Mr. Mardesich: That's right.

Ms. Boswell: Can you remember that period? How did that all come about?

Mr. Mardesich: Through their accusations that there were payoffs. But when it came time to go before the jury and all that, they brought in all these people. Never was it said that I had put the heat on anybody for campaign contributions, all of them. Even some of Greive's people got up and went on the stand for me. Some of his own strongest supporters got up and supported me.

Ms. Boswell: What do you think prompted those accusations in the first place?

Mr. Mardesich: I think it was part of Mr. Greive's attempt to get even. I think that's exactly what it was.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of campaign contributions, they had given you $10,000 or actually a total of $20,000. Was that an unusually high amount of campaign contributions?

Mr. Mardesich: The garbage group gave me $20,000, was it?

Ms. Boswell: Yes.

Mr. Mardesich: I'll have to go back and think. I didn't realize it was that much. That was a large contribution, no two ways about that. I forget now what the big issue was that they were involved in.

Ms. Boswell: I think it had something to do with a bill that they wanted, a refuse removal bill called Senate Bill 52.

Mr. Mardesich: Do you know generally?

Ms. Boswell: It had to do with licensing for garbage haulers. There was a company called Bayside Disposal involved.

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, Bayside. What was his name, it slipped on me.

Ms. Boswell: Bruce Levin. Warren—

Mr. Mardesich: Rosario, something of that sort? I didn't know any of these guys that well, but I knew Warren from before. He'd probably helped me in other campaigns, I don't recall. He was, in my opinion, a straight forward, honest son-of-a-gun. He told you what he wanted. It's part of the game. They told you what they were interested in and you accepted it or didn't, which I had no problem with. If the bill was all right, what's the difference? And they supported me for years, not just that time. Rosario did, especially, for years.

As a matter of fact, one time I had a vessel tied up right next to Rosario's junkyard in South Seattle. That's where I knew him first. I had an ATR—Attack Tug Rescue—tied up right near his yard, right next to it almost. It was a 160-, 170-footer that I had bought surplus. I had two of

them and tied one of them up there and converted the other. I left that one there for some time while I was doing the first one. That's how I first knew Warren.

Ms. Boswell: In the grand jury investigation, you said that you were doling out some of this money to other candidates. Can you tell me a little about that? Was that your response to Greive?

Mr. Mardesich: To Mr. Greive. Exactly. Mr. Greive did the same thing, so we'll give him a taste of his own medicine. We did: fire with fire. It was that simple.

Ms. Boswell: Who did you help?

Mr. Mardesich: Who I helped and who I didn't? I don't remember who-all exactly. I was doling it out in not such large amounts. They were generally people who were supportive of me. Maybe some who weren't that supportive, but most of them to whom I funneled the funds were those who were supportive of me. That's the name of the game. Why do you think Greive was leader for so many years? He used to do the same darn thing. I learned all my lessons from him.

Ms. Boswell: They said you kept the money in a box in your basement. Is that true?

Mr. Mardesich: That was true. As a matter of fact, it was a Scotch box. I can't think what the label was. It was a yellow label. Nevertheless it was in a box down there thrown on the shelf with the rest of the stuff in the basement.

Ms. Boswell: Do you always keep that much money in your house?

Mr. Mardesich: Only if I've got a lot of cash. In those days we had no reporting laws or any of that stuff. So I put it in there. It was easy to hand out in cash—more of an influence on the other legislators if it was cash. I kept it all in cash and doled it out that way. I helped who I thought would help me.

Ms. Boswell: Can you tell me anything about the grand jury? Here you are a legislator and you're forced to go before a grand jury. What was that like?

Mr. Mardesich: It was a pain in the you-know-what, although I never felt that anything would come of the darn thing. People said I acted nonchalant about it—well, I was. Greive and his buddies spread that story, and the prosecutors accepted it, except they couldn't show it when it came time. They said I was out hustling the people, which I wasn't. I didn't. People came to me voluntarily.

I did do one bit of hustling. It was for others. I'd say, "Hey, Joe needs help. Obviously he's got a tough candidate against him, yak, yak, yak." I did that. But I did not do much of that. They came of their own volition.

Ms. Boswell: When you talk about hustling, were there other people in the Legislature who really did—who got money for votes?

Mr. Mardesich: For votes? I doubt like heck there was much of that. I never heard of it at least. The lobbyists were there—they'd help. Boeing would help you. All the big companies helped you. Insurance companies, Boeing, labor unions, everybody would throw it in there, trying, I assume, to get influence. What else?

When it came to a matter of "Hey, we want this moved," I was never approached in that way by anybody. I don't know that others were. I know I wasn't. Maybe they thought I was too much of a bastard. They were probably a little hesitant.

Ms. Boswell: They thought you'd kick them in the rear?

Mr. Mardesich: I was going to say, probably because you never know what he's liable to do.

Ms. Boswell: How can you draw a line? If you have lobbyists who are there for a reason to convince you of their point of view, how do you draw the line between getting a contribution for your campaign and getting a contribution for something else, like passing a bill?

Mr. Mardesich: I never got campaign

contributions except during a campaign. I never heard of anybody getting it that way, either. They didn't come down there and, "Hey, we pass this bill and go with that." I never saw anything of that sort. Whether it exists or not, I can't say, but I was not aware of it happening.

Mostly, it was people who you knew. They would send someone down that knew you—people who were in the businesses. PEMCO would send somebody that I knew who was a PEMCO official. Labor unions would send down people I knew.

Weinmeister of the Teamsters had his group down there, but only on one occasion did he ask me to drop by his office on the way home from Olympia one day. That was it. He gave me a song-and-dance about what bills he was interested in. Not only that, he was asking about, "Who are we going to support or want to support this time?" That sort of thing. After that, he'd call me up once in a while. It was mostly light banter and chatter, "what's going on" and that sort of thing. In my opinion, he did a good job.

Ms. Boswell: If you get a good-sized contribution from a group or a company, isn't it natural to want to support them?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose it would be of some influence, but I never let it bother me that way. I voted against plenty of bills. I don't think that most people who are lobbyists of any consequence had a lot of measures they were interested in. They'd talk to you about them and, as I say, often you'd say, "No, I don't buy it. I don't think it's a good bill." They'd shrug their shoulders and walk away. Maybe I was an innocent, but I never saw it happen. Whether it did or not, don't ask me. I don't know. I never had anyone approach me on that basis—on a bill—to get it done and all that. On general positions you heard all kinds of stuff.

Ms. Boswell: What about dinners and parties? Was that something that was common?

Mr. Mardesich: They were very common in those days—dinners, parties. I'm not so sure that they were that bad, either, because there was a lot of give-and-take in that atmosphere. You'd get needling, this, that or the other, and you'd pick up more information there than you would in a meeting. Believe me, that is where you found out what people's ideas were and all that. They'd loosen up. I don't think there's as much of that nowadays as we used to do then. And I'm not so sure that it's good, because it was a more relaxed atmosphere and people would argue. We used to get into some good arguments around the table in the evenings. Not violent, just let the hair down and why your position was thus and so. I still think it was a damn good thing.

Ms. Boswell: What do you think of the campaign reform laws of today? Are they positive?

Mr. Mardesich: I've listened to some of them. Nowadays, they don't even—it appears to me, although I'm sure it's not so—they don't even appear to know each other half the time. They tell me that there is very little of this out in the evening business, dinners, parties. Once in awhile there's an annual party, but not like there was then where they'd sit around and relax. If not out at the Tyee or one of those places, at somebody's home. The boys would gather in some bar and they'd get a lot of stuff hacked out, a lot of stuff discussed, and they'd get a lot of input that you would never get in a general committee meeting. Some people never say a damn thing at a committee meeting. They'd sit, listen, and didn't ask any questions—nothing. But there would be a much different response in a relaxed atmosphere of a dinner or a party. I'm not so sure that it's a good thing that there aren't some parties and all that stuff. They say they don't even know each other, half of them. In my book that's not a good deal. If you don't know someone, you don't know what they're thinking, or why they are there. When you get to know people well enough, you almost know how they're going to go on things before you even talk to them.

I think—as I say, this is not from observation, but simply from talking to some of the people—that a lot of that comradeship between the parties is lost. It wasn't Democrats against Republicans. We'd mix it up right there in the parties, at the bars, at the tables; we'd sit down for dinner and this, that, and the other and hack it out. To me it

was a better atmosphere than I understand they have now.

Ms. Boswell: Some people called that back-room politics. How much of what actually did get done in the Senate at that time was done by these personal relationships?

Mr. Mardesich: What's back-room politics? What's the difference whether it's done in the back room or in the front room? They talk that way, but I've never felt that it was true. You're in a bar sitting around, a dinner, and you're arguing there. What's back-room about that?

We used to have caucus meetings and have it down and out there. We used to even congregate once in a while in my office, once in a while in Gissberg's office, once in a while in Durkan's office, almost by accident. You'd end up sometimes—hey, a bunch of the boys are over at John's place or wherever. Pretty soon there'd be ten or twelve of us there. No place to sit anymore and then you'd be just talking and having a drink. It was a different attitude.

Ms. Boswell: Did a good deal of business get taken care of there?

Mr. Mardesich: No. Ninety-nine percent of it goes on the floor. All I'm saying is that you learned what people were like and where they were going, and you could almost determine from your own association with them what their position was. If you asked what Reuben did when he wanted a certain bill, I could almost tell you today. And the same with all of them. Once you get to know people, you don't have to put it all down on paper, it's there. You'll see it, it's going to happen and you can almost count the votes without even talking to them. Once in awhile they fall off.

Ms. Boswell: Did lobbyists join in?

Mr. Mardesich: Lobbyists would be in there, too. Lobbyists would sit around with us. They'd give you their position. Most of them, and I think rightly so, were inclined not to say too much on those types of things. Probably because they didn't want to alienate someone. They'd join in if someone tried to pin them down, but most of the time they were fairly quiet in those meetings. They were doing the same thing we were trying to do, trying to get a feel for it.

Ms. Boswell: How much do people really listen to lobbyists in terms of providing them with information?

Mr. Mardesich: That depended on the lobbyist. Some lobbyists, you learn, are on the level, and they would just give you their reasons: one, two, three, and four. "Now, here are these arguments against it: one, two, three, four, and five." Good lobbyists would tell you both sides of the question themselves.

Ms. Boswell: Who do you think were particularly effective?

Mr. Mardesich: I think Bud Coffey was one of the better ones. I shouldn't say this, but outside of his manner, Joe Brennan from Seafirst was a good lobbyist in terms of what he knew about the subject and gave it out to you. He was somewhat gruff once in a while. His attitude was a little different than Coffey's. Another good one was a fellow from Spokane—what was his name? He lobbied for Washington Water Power first. I don't know if he still does. I just can't recall his name right now.

A lot of them will give you their side of the story and that's all. To me that's not a good lobbyist. What he's got to do is tell you the arguments: one, two, three, and four. "Now, here's what they say is wrong with it, here's the other side of the coin. You make your mind up." When you get that sort of background on both sides, it's a lot easier to absorb what's in a bill.

"You've seen the bills. This is underlined, that's underlined, this is the reason," and so on. These people would give you the background of what the bill's about which would help you breeze through them.

I don't know if anyone will admit it, but I spent a lot of nights in that damn place. After dinner, go back at nine or ten o'clock. Work until one or two in the morning, looking through and reading bills. I'm sure they often wondered how I knew about

the bills. That's why. It isn't because it was for nothing—it was because I spent some time there.

Ms. Boswell: Did your legal background help you at all? Was that a useful preparation?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think so, particularly. I never practiced any law to speak of, just a little. I had enough headaches of my own in my business, so I practiced for myself.

Ms. Boswell: I want to step back and discuss the trial in greater detail. There were also some accusations, revelations, that Seafirst had contributed a lot of campaign money as well that went to Archie Baker. Can you talk about that at all?

Mr. Mardesich: Seafirst. This was not so dumb on their part. They got Archie to go to work for them, and they know Archie's talking to me every day or almost every day.

Ms. Boswell: You shared a law office, right?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes.

Ms. Boswell: You weren't actually partners?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I used to work on a case for him once in a while. I did very little law work when I was there, or ever. But I used to have my fishing business operate out of there. I had a couple of rooms and operated out of there.

Ms. Boswell: So Seafirst actually hired him. What did they hire him to do?

Mr. Mardesich: Lobby. Give advice and all of that. But it was only once because right away there was sort of a question about him.

Ms. Boswell: When it came out in the papers that they had given him money over a four or five year period, was that the end?

Mr. Mardesich: He didn't tell me all that he had done, and I didn't expect him to. A four or five year period, you say? Is that right?

Ms. Boswell: That's what the paper said.

Mr. Mardesich: I don't recall that, but it may well be.

Ms. Boswell: Did he try to influence you? Did you have a sense that he was lobbying you?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I suppose he could have been just talking about an issue. He never hit me directly as a lobbyist.

Ms. Boswell: He would have been lobbying for the banking industry, generally?

Mr. Mardesich: Yes, I guess so. I suppose what affects Seafirst affects all banks. In effect, that's what he was doing, I guess.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me about Archie. What was he like? How did you get to know him?

Mr. Mardesich: Archie was active in Henry Jackson's campaigns for a while. He was a friend, too, of John Salter. They were close and that's where we got to know each other. They were both friends of my brother's, and they were friends of mine, but in a less close way. I became closer as time went by with both Salter and Baker, when I moved into the office there. Salter, his office was there with Jackson's, so he was in Seattle. They never, neither of them, tried to influence me in any way directly. Never. If they were doing it, it was almost subconscious. And I think that it was more of talking about an issue or something.

What the hell was the difference to Salter what the issue was? He was working for Henry Jackson in Washington, D.C. and he'd come out here during the campaign period and be here three or four months before the campaign really got underway. He'd be here for four or five months out of the year.

Ms. Boswell: What about Baker? What was his interest in politics? Did he ever run for office?

Mr. Mardesich: Baker ran once. He was there before my brother, and I think that's how he got my brother interested. Why he didn't want to stay

in, I don't know. That's where it all started. Then they tried to get my brother to run for Congress, when and if there was going to be an opening.

Ms. Boswell: Did you ever think about running for Congress?

Mr. Mardesich: No. I reflect now, and wonder why the heck I didn't. It would have been, in my book, a much easier position than running for the Legislature. While you're in the Legislature, you're subject to a lot of direct contact. There's contact with the boys in Washington, D.C. but not like your local election or legislature. Very rarely did people contact them back there. Salter, they'd contact here.

Ms. Boswell: You preferred that distance?

Mr. Mardesich: I think it would have been an entirely different attitude, different atmosphere. I don't doubt that I'd have been that interested because then you'd have to campaign a lot. I didn't particularly like campaigning. When you stop to think about it, this Second District was from the border to the south, out on the West Coast, all up through the Straits of Juan de Fuca. It was one-third of the western side of the mountains. It was a big district—a lot of work to be done on it.

I know my brother had thought about it. If it had opened up, I think he would have gone, had he not been killed. He would have stayed in the state Legislature, and as soon as it opened he'd have been there, running for the national Congress. He was a lot more interested in politics than I was.

Ms. Boswell: Getting back to Archie Baker. What prompted him to get involved in lobbying for Seafirst, or do you think it was just a maneuver on Seafirst's part?

Mr. Mardesich: He did have some exposure in Washington, D.C. I could be wrong in this, but I do think that he worked back there once. That's been so long ago. I think that's where his interest first came. Maybe that's how he got involved. Through my brother, Archie had an acquaintanceship with all of these legislative people because he was active.

Ms. Boswell: With the money that he got from Seafirst, did he dole out campaign contributions?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes. Not only to me, but to others as well. He always did. From day one that I knew him, he was helping political types. He had a real interest in them.

Ms. Boswell: Seafirst was said to have given him $60,000 or more. It seems like a lot of money.

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't realize it was that much, but I didn't see any $60,000. It might have been over a long period of time.

Ms. Boswell: During that period—at least going back and reading the newspapers about it—you've got some accusations by this man, Martonik, about the garbage haulers. Then you get the indictment and you have to go before the grand jury. There was a lot of pressure when you were trying to have your business and be in the Legislature, take care of your family, and everything else. Then you're acquitted of the charges. Then there are more accusations and the Seafirst allegations kind of come out at the same time. Was there a lot of pressure on you?

Mr. Mardesich: Pressure, sure. As I say, I didn't let it bother me. I knew that I had done nothing wrong. The hell with it. The only thing that really got me mad was that it cost me some money—paying a lawyer, this, that, and the other. You bet it did. That really got me hot after awhile when I got that lawyer's bill.

Ms. Boswell: What about the impact on your family? Were they supportive of you?

Mr. Mardesich: Their support was 100 percent. It bothered me that my wife had to take on that. My kids were younger then, and I assumed that it didn't bother them as much as it did her. Maybe they got needled about it now and then. I don't know. The oldest son, if there was too much needling, I can see where he would get hurt, but it probably didn't bother him too much.

Ms. Boswell: Looking back, how do you think

the newspapers handled that situation?

Mr. Mardesich: I thought they went overboard a little. Shelby Scates was the one I thought went farthest overboard. I chewed him pretty good, too.

Ms. Boswell: When you say overboard, are you talking about a vendetta?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know, maybe it was. Maybe it was a little bit. He didn't like me and I didn't like him, particularly. Not that it was any great thing, but maybe that was part of it. I'd probably called him a name or two once in awhile.

Ms. Boswell: Was there a lot of pressure on you to resign during that period, especially during the grand jury investigation?

Mr. Mardesich: Resign from the Legislature?

Ms. Boswell: No. Resign from being majority leader.

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't get too much pressure. As a matter of fact, a lot of them asked me to stay on. They wanted me to stay on, and I thought, well, I can stay on, the votes are there. They'll keep me. But I could see there would be no end to the yapping. It would overshadow what we were doing and everything else. I talked to Walgren about it and he decided, okay, he'd go. And so I resigned.

Ms. Boswell: But you held off for a while from resigning?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yes, I did. As I say, the boys in the Democratic caucus wanted me to stay. My support was very broad.

When it came down to a vote, I even had an approach from the Republicans. "If you want votes, just let us know. If you want to be the floor leader, it can come from either party." They said, "We will not name anyone to run against you, and we'll vote for you if you want." But I said, "Oh, forget it."

Ms. Boswell: Why do you think you had that kind of support?

Mr. Mardesich: Because I gave them an equal opportunity to speak with our guys, to introduce bills, and all that kind of stuff, and they appreciated it. If they were right, they were right. That was my position. They, I suppose, hadn't been subjected to that kind of treatment very often and they responded. Even to this day. Frank Atwood was there. He was one of them. And a boy from Olympia who was there, who was there for years. Chuck Moriarty and half a dozen of them were 100 percent supportive. Their leadership—period.

Ms. Boswell: Before you resigned, Slade Gorton got involved in an investigation of campaign contributions. What role did he play? How did he fit into all this?

Mr. Mardesich: I didn't really ask him about it, but I suspect it was the publicity and all the rest of the stuff. How could he be sitting doing nothing when all these so-called charges were running around? I think it was that simple.

Ms. Boswell: What was your relationship with Slade Gorton? Was he someone you could trust?

Mr. Mardesich: Slade was also majority leader after Dan went on to be governor. I got along with Slade. Slade is a hell of a sharp cookie in my book. He's got the gray matter. Once in awhile, he'd be out on cloud nine. But I got along with Slade very well. I had no problem with him. He was, as I say, sharp. Once in awhile you'd have to wake him up—not literally—but the wheels were turning somewhere else. I'd have to make a remark, "Slade, don't you think you ought to make a motion?" He was sitting right across the aisle from me.

Ms. Boswell: So, you had the support of the caucus, but you saw the trial as a distraction?

Mr. Mardesich: It was because the support was there. No question about it. And yet I could see that this is going to be a distraction. This story will be all you'll be reading about in the papers. It will be repeat, repeat, repeat, and it's going to have its effect and detract from the political business. That's why I resigned. I figured to hell with it,

what's the difference? So I'm majority leader, so I'm sitting down here not majority leader, and I felt that ninety percent of the boys were going to still ask me or talk to me, and they did. It didn't bother me, and I figured to hell with it. Why should I worry about being the majority leader anymore?

Ms. Boswell: Did the incident affect the rest of your political career?

Mr. Mardesich: If it did, it sure as hell wasn't noticeable. It undoubtedly had some effect. But as I say, they didn't even use it that much in the anti-Mardesich press or in the campaigns. They were careful not to bring that up. Why, I don't know. Once in a great while they'd shoot it, but not that much.

CHAPTER 10

LOOKING BACK

Ms. Boswell: It's been awhile since we last talked. For this interview I wanted to look back over your whole career.

You were originally a reluctant candidate for political office and then you ended up spending a fairly large number of years in office. What did politics mean to you? Did your views of it change over time?

Mr. Mardesich: Not too much. I got into it quite by accident. My brother got killed and I was appointed. It was of no great interest to me. My brother was vitally interested and had he not been killed, I'm sure that he would have been in Congress because he was thinking about it.

Whereas with me, it was a nothing. I preferred to fish and got into that more deeply. I was running boats from early on.

Ms. Boswell: Why did you stay in politics?

Mr. Mardesich: In politics? Well, because once you ran, then people expected you to do it. You got acquainted with a group little by little, and pretty soon you're meeting with them half the time and having lunch and this, that, and the other. It's like anything, you build up a group of friends and you become socially intertwined with them.

Ms. Boswell: Did your feeling about politics change over time? As you developed these relationships, did it become more fun? Did it become more important to you?

Mr. Mardesich: I enjoyed it all the time, really. You could see the importance of it. That became clear in short order when you ended up working with such large dollar amounts.

I'd end up in fights with people that I probably shouldn't have been fighting with, from labor leaders to teachers to everybody else. I ended up arguing with them about pensions. I said, "To hell with it." I cared less if I was elected or reelected or not, so it didn't bother me to take them on openly.

Ms. Boswell: Is it fair to say that in some way your attitude towards politics freed you to be a better politician?

Mr. Mardesich: It could be. I don't know when you say better, the implication in that was that it was no good to begin with.

Ms. Boswell: Not intended!

Mr. Mardesich: That's the lawyer in me coming out. But I enjoyed it, I did. I really enjoyed it. In time, as I say, you made a much broader group of friends. We used to go out together, those in the Everett area especially. We'd go down to the Elks or the yacht club.

Ms. Boswell: Is that why you stayed in politics?

Mr. Mardesich: For the people that I got acquainted with and we knew quite well, like Johnny Salter. Scoop knew my brother well. I got to know Jackson, but I didn't ever get that close to him. I got close to John Salter. We were very good friends for years. He was a guy who I felt I could trust without hesitation. For anything. He'd level with me.

I made a lot of good friends. Gissberg was one of them. We needled the heck out of each other half the time. It was an enjoyable thing and I met a heck of a lot of nice people—Gissberg and Goldsworthy and a whole mess of them.

Ms. Boswell: What do you remember as your greatest accomplishment? Could you name the one thing you did as a legislator that you're really proud of?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, as a legislator. I was going to say I located Rosemary Mardesich, Rosemary Quigley, who became my wife. She's not listening so I can get away with it.

Ms. Boswell: What about as a legislator?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't have anything of that much consequence that stands out as a particular issue, except the battle we got into over the pension system. It was apparent that the pension system was going to go bankrupt, and it really was headed for it, too. People were telling me, even other legislators, that "You're a crazy to fool around with that because you're going to get everybody mad at you." Nothing like a fight for a Slav, you know. So, I got involved in it.

We rewrote the whole pension system and now it's not bankrupt. We fixed it. But, as I say, I got all kinds of people mad at me for that—state employees, public employees, period. The firemen were mad as heck at me. They're the ones who really picked up the ball and ran it against me. But I was not so damn interested that I worried about it. They were upset because we had done the pension system. They don't seem to recognize that they could have well been overturned and there would have been no more pension system in time. We were headed for massive deficits, billions and billions, until we rewrote that darn thing. It didn't hurt them that bad. It hurt just a little. It lengthened out the work span, the time you had to be on the job before you got full retirement, and it worked.

I think that was probably the greatest achievement in my legislative career. Revamping that and correcting the system so that it has kept working to this day.

Ms. Boswell: What drew you into that particular issue?

Mr. Mardesich: It became apparent that there were problems because I was on Appropriations—head of Appropriations—and that became obviously the big money draw. So I started looking into it and then realized that this was really going to break the state. Then I started rewriting it.

I'll never forget when I stood up and made one of the early speeches on that issue. One of the guys in the Senate sort of slipped up to my desk saying, "You sure you want to fool with this?"

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "Man, it's going to raise a lot of hackles." He voted with me.

It was Bob Bailey. He was a heck of a good man in that Legislature. He kept his word. If he said he was going to do something, he did it. There were some people who would tell you they were going to vote for you and you'd turn around and go back to your desk and the vote would come up and he'd vote against you. I wondered, "Did I misunderstand him?" But some people were like that— the last person who talked to them, that sort of thing. There weren't too many of those.

Ms. Boswell: Why do you think today politicians have perhaps not as high esteem in the eyes of the rest of the population as they did in the past? Why do you think that is?

Mr. Mardesich: I suppose because the papers have been working them over more. Maybe there are—this is sort of a left-handed compliment to myself, of course—maybe the people running have been less in tune with the system. There are people to this day that I don't understand why the heck they were there. Did nothing and really didn't understand a lot of it. They didn't work either. You had to really work, do a lot of reading.

I used to sit down at that place. Sometimes after dinner I'd come back and I'd sit there until one or two o'clock in the morning, just reading bills. People would wonder, "How come he knows all that stuff?" It took time. That's how I knew it. But they became wary of fooling with me.

Ms. Boswell: What about the type of people who became politicians at that time? Do you see any differences?

Mr. Mardesich: I haven't been exposed to them much of late. I doubt like heck if there's too much difference, really. As I say, I know very few of them that well anymore. It doesn't take long.

It used to be once you were in the Senate, you knew everybody in the place in short order, and they were there twelve, fourteen, eighteen, twenty

years. It changed very, very slowly. The turnover was very slow.

A few years back I wandered down there. Somebody wanted me to clear something through the place for them and I went down. I was utterly amazed at how few of those people I really knew. I couldn't believe that in such a short period it would change that much, and yet it did.

I don't know why, but I think part of the reason was the Public Disclosure Act. People didn't want to indicate who they were working for, especially a lot of lawyers. A lot of lawyers quit running for the Legislature because they had to list their clients—that sort of thing. I don't blame a lot of them for doing it. I didn't have many clients. That's why it didn't bother me one way or the other, but there were a lot of people and I would assume there were a lot of clients who wouldn't want their names showing up on somebody's list as hiring them or supporting them, whatever. That affected it, I'm sure.

Ms. Boswell: It's interesting because in one sense, certainly when you started and throughout most of your career, the payment for being a legislator was virtually non-existent. And yet today you can make enough to get by. So you would think you'd attract more, rather than less qualified people.

Mr. Mardesich: I would assume, I really don't know, but don't forget that it was every two years—it was sixty days, every two years. Then it became: let's stop the clock. So it became sixty-two days, and sixty-five days and then seventy days, and then they decided we'd better lengthen the session and we'd better have a session every year. But as I say, way back when I first got in, the salary was fifty dollars a month and two months out of every two years. But now it's three and four months every year and that makes a heck of a difference in your capacity to do it.

A lot of the companies, I'm sure, wouldn't mind their people going there for a couple of months, because that would give those companies an inside view of what's going on and all that sort of thing, so they urged people to go. But now as I say, it's just too long a hassle. And I don't think it needs to be, but it is.

Ms. Boswell: You say it doesn't need to be. Are there things that you think are faulty with the process that should be changed?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think the process has changed so much as the time element. The process is the process, period. It's all who you knew and who you could talk to in the place. That people knew you and trusted you. They went with you, and I've got to believe that over time—I saw it happen—there were many changes. There used to be eight or ten guys when I was there that we got to know real well. They were usually people who were stronger in the place and they made the decisions. We'd go over to somebody's office, sit around and talk and throw the bull after the session was over and then come back at night, some of us did. I was not alone; there were a couple of people now and then who were reading there. But there were plenty of nights I was there alone.

I didn't do it with that in mind, but I think that's one of the things that made people possibly use the word "respect" or be wary of you, or not question you, because they felt that, "By golly, he knows what's in that bill better than I do." They became cautious about it. By golly, it made a difference. It really did.

I used to stand up after awhile and make a motion, drop the amendment, give a quick, quick, quick description of the amendment, and sit down. Nobody would challenge me. They just trusted me, you know? That was the nicest part of the Legislature, the fact that you could do something and they believed you.

Ms. Boswell: But you had to earn that trust?

Mr. Mardesich: That I did. That's why my eyes are so bad. I did a hell of a lot of reading, a lot of it.

Ms. Boswell: Keeping in mind all the talk of term limits, does it take a few sessions to get really comfortable—to know the system—or are there some people who will never know the system?

Mr.Mardesich: There are some from one end of the range to the other. Some people come down to Olympia and it doesn't take but a short time and they are doing the work. Other people possibly

show a real lack of interest, or don't care, or they just don't get involved and do anything about it. I have seen a number of those. It's just an attitude—no interest and you wonder why they did it. But it's hard for some people to get involved—for very shy people.

But I would say the majority, by far, are good legislators. There's an occasional lemon, and generally they didn't last very long. Most legislators were on the ball and were good workers. Some would come with an agenda. They'd face what's coming up and react to it. Some people are interested—it has to do with their occupation or whatever. They are there to protect that or do something for it. Most of them are quite open about it.

Ms. Boswell: To be a good legislator, what in your mind are the most important characteristics?

Mr. Mardesich: Good eyes!

The boys have to learn to trust you, and then they do trust you. Once they see what's going on, they trust you.

Ms. Boswell: Lots of times when you talk about people in the Legislature, you talk about "the boys."

Mr. Mardesich: There were very few ladies in the Legislature then.

Ms. Boswell: Tell me a little about the women legislators. Were there any differences?

Mr. Mardesich: Between the ladies and the men?

Ms. Boswell: Yes—the way they approached things.

Mr. Mardesich: When I first went down, I sat between two ladies, Emma Abbott Ridgway and Jeanette Testu—one on either side of me. I don't know why they did that, but they did it. It had nothing to do with the seating in the House, but they put me right between the two gals and I got along beautifully with both of them.

Jeanette was much more low-key, but Emma Abbott Ridgway could take you on if you needed taking on. She could be a real argumentative type. But her head was screwed on right, there were no two ways about that.

They were the only women on the Democratic side at that time. Then a boy from Spokane died—I forget his name—and his wife was appointed. She was the third one. There just weren't very many women then in the Legislature. Very few. Maybe that's why the place is better now.

Ms. Boswell: In terms of what the Legislature does, is it important to represent the will of your constituency? There's always the debate that once you're elected, you should follow your conscience because you're the person who was elected, versus trying always to represent the interests of the people.

Mr. Mardesich: I think if you just try to represent "the people," quote, and I use that in a very broad sense—part of this group thinks a certain way and this group will think another way. Another one over there thinks a third way. So, in my opinion, you assimilate all that stuff and then you make a decision. You have to figure out what the heck it's all about and who it affects and why, and go your own route. You figure it out in your mind, "What's the best way to do this? Is this good, bad or indifferent?" If you don't do that, then you're headed for trouble in my book. I always felt, heck, if I understand it and know what's in it, I'll argue with anybody about the darn thing. As I say, as a consequence of having done so damn much reading, they came to trust you and to understand, by golly, you knew what the heck you were talking about.

Ms. Boswell: Would you say that the system really worked?

Mr. Mardesich: It isn't that I was "Mr. Guy" out there doing it all myself. There were others in the place that did the same type of thing. There are today, I'm sure, people who are doing the same darn thing. They do their homework and they have an opinion as to what they want to do. If you are to rely on every little group, what they want, you'll never make a decision. You get so many different views, so you have to figure it out yourself. Is this

right or is this wrong from your point of view? And vote it. If the people don't like it, they'll dump you.

I enjoyed those days. There were a lot of good people, a lot of good heads, and there was interesting stuff you were doing. Some of it was boring as heck. You'd get some bills that are about like that—I won't say as thick as this book, but danged close.

Ms. Boswell: A couple of inches thick?

Mr. Mardesich: Not quite that much. A bill. And to read that, a lot of it is a one-word change here, two or three words here, insert a new paragraph there. If you don't read it all, how do you know what it's about? If you don't read enough about that subject matter to really get a feel for it, how do you know whether the changes that they're making are of any consequence, or are good or bad? You don't. That's why you have to do a lot of reading if you're going to try and do a good job. It's that simple.

So many of the times an amendment will mean nothing. But if you read the whole deal, you'll see that it not only means something, it reverses the whole business. I've seen them do that.

Ms. Boswell: Now if there are as many as 3,000 bills introduced in a session, it seems physically impossible for somebody to read them all. What can they do to change the system to make that more manageable?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know how you change the system—you could put a limit on the number of bills that any person could introduce which would have some effect. Some people will put their name on every bill that comes through the place. I didn't. For many years I didn't put my name on bills. Unless I knew what was in it, I didn't want to sign it. There were a lot of people you could take them up to and say, "Hey, throw your name on this." I didn't want to sign bills as a sponsor unless I knew what was in them. And, as I say, that required one hell of a lot of reading. But you got to know it.

Ms. Boswell: Do you have any disappointments? Looking back, are there things you wish you had accomplished that you did not?

Mr. Mardesich: The biggest thing I think that I accomplished was that revamping of the pension systems. It wasn't just a couple of months job, we were there three sessions working on that. I know damn well I got more deeply involved than anybody else in the place.

Ms. Boswell: What about things that you would have liked to do that you didn't get to do?

Mr. Mardesich: There weren't too many of those.

Ms. Boswell: Any causes you wanted to support?

Mr. Mardesich: I had no causes. I even stayed off of the Fisheries Committee on purpose. I refused to go on it because I felt that it was something that was affecting my livelihood and everything else, and if I wanted to change something, I could do it on the floor. I didn't want to be in a position of being on a committee that was writing this stuff, simply because to me it appeared to be a conflict of interest. Likewise, there were mostly farmers on the Agriculture Committee. Damn near all of them were farmers.

Ms. Boswell: You can argue that you know that business best.

Mr. Mardesich: Sure. It works both ways. You know the business, so you should be on it. I figured I didn't want to be in a position of influence too directly, and yet I would know what the heck the subject was about. If it was a bad bill, I'd shoot it down, or try to. I did some monkey business on the fishing thing, but it was only because people asked me to.

Ms. Boswell: What do you mean by monkey business?

Mr. Mardesich: Work. They asked me about bills and what it means in the fishing business, and I'd tell them from my point of view what it means. "Believe it or not, take it or leave it. That's the way I see it. If you want to see another fisherman I'll give you some names—a dozen of them. You

can go to Seattle and ask them."

Ms. Boswell: You had a career both in private industry, in fishing, and even a law degree, and then in the public domain. What do you see as the biggest difference in these areas?

Mr. Mardesich: One thing that was good about it, the fact that I was in the fishing business, was that in the fishing business we used to go north in May and session would be all over with. We'd come back in the Fall and session would start after the holidays.

I had a degree in law but I didn't spend that much time in the law practice, very little. The fishing business was something I enjoyed and enjoyed from the day I got into it when I was a kid when my dad had us out fishing.

I assume that there are plenty of jobs in the private sector outside of the fishing business where you could get bored as all heck. Get tired and sick of them. I didn't have that problem with the fishing business, probably partially because, as I say, it was not a full-time, year-round deal. It was a seasonal type deal. We used to, I admit, go to California once in awhile to fish down there in the wintertime and so on, but not too often. We did that on occasion—the weather was a lot better down there.

Ms. Boswell: It was certainly better than Alaska, I'd say.

Mr. Mardesich: And how. Up in Alaska at the westward—when I say westward, that's the Aleutian Island area—we'd have a skiff and that's separate from the boat and all that. The skiff had what they called a lead that they'd set out and then the net would be beyond that. The fish would hit the lead and the lead would come from shore and the fish would go in the net. So then we'd throw that end of the net to the boys in the skiff when he'd come around and we'd pick up the lead and go back to the boat.

I've seen it from the time when we set, where it was flat as glass and within a half hour it would be blowing so hard you couldn't even stand up in it. Just bang! That was in the Aleutian area, primarily.

Ms. Boswell: Totally unpredictable.

Mr. Mardesich: Absolutely unpredictable. It could be mean as all hell on occasion. I lost my father and brother up there due to weather.

Ms. Boswell: But even so, you still loved it?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, yeah. I enjoyed it.

Ms. Boswell: Was it the unpredictability?

Mr. Mardesich: I think it's the type of business where it was a competitive deal. To me it was not critical whether we caught 100,000 fish that season, or whether we only got 40,000. It was all the competition. Obviously, it was nice to get the most fish, but to me it was, who was high boat that day? And then it was, who is high boat tomorrow? Who is high boat the next day, and so on. It was a competition. Fighting to be sure you were in there with the rest of the high boats. That was, to me, more important and more fun than the rest of it put together.

Ms. Boswell: Was politics the same? Was that a competition, too?

Mr. Mardesich: It's not that same attitude that you have when you're out there. I suppose to a certain extent, but man, up there it was every day. How much fish you'd catch compared to the other guy. It was important to get a lot of fish because you got more money. But the issue was: Be sure you're one of the high boats, period, every day, and you will end up the season the high boat. That was to me a very satisfying type of competition.

Ms. Boswell: It just seems as though that—and this is just my interpretation—in politics, too, that it was somewhat of a game. That you liked that competition and being able to get those bills through.

Mr. Mardesich: That may be so. To maneuver things and all that, maybe so. As I say, I never did get tired of the politics. I got in battles with Joe Davis and some of the boys, but even so, I enjoyed it. Joe Davis still laughs about it when I meet him.

Mr. Boswell: Your last years in the Legislature were pretty tough years. Can you tell me a little about your last years in politics and how you felt about it?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think my attitude changed too doggone much. Some of the people that I had alienated, in terms of not giving them what they wanted, really got out after me. Part of the reason that they got after me was the public employees pension system. The firemen headed up the drive against me. I still have a lot of them who are friends of mine. It means nothing.

It's like anything else, there's competition. It's like the fishing business. You care, but you don't care how much you catch that day as long as you got more than anyone else that day. I think that's a little bit true of some of the politics, too.

Ms. Boswell: The indictments and all of the other things that came out at the end—the accusations—how did you feel about that?

Mr. Mardesich: I used to get sort of PO'd at it. People wondered, gee, he must have thick skin. I didn't spend my life in the fishing business getting beat up all for nothing. It didn't bother me that much. It bothered me more for my family than it did for myself. Rosemary used to get upset as heck about it, but it didn't bother me that much. If that's the way they feel, fine. I'm still voting however I want to. I didn't give a damn what they said.

Ms. Boswell: So you think most of the charges and the investigations were political in motivation?

Mr. Mardesich: I have no doubt. Who did most of the pushing—Greive. But we won.

You know what hurt me most about that, the charges and all that? When it was all over and I got the bill from the lawyer for $55,000, that's what really hurt. Although he was a good lawyer.

Ms. Boswell: Is there anything about all those episodes that you would do differently looking back?

Mr. Mardesich: Do you mean in terms of reaction to them?

Ms. Boswell: Both your reaction or just in terms of the way you conducted your affairs?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't think so. I did what I felt was right and it didn't bother me. Period. Once in awhile people would ask me to do things and if there was no consequence, I'd do them. If I thought they were wrong, I'd say, "Well," or else, "I haven't read it. I don't know if it's good, bad, or indifferent, but if you're interested I'll take a look at it." That's what I did.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think that the way politics was conducted then, the closer relationships that people had, is different than today? In other words, are the kinds of ethics that people try to apply to politics, have they changed?

Mr. Mardesich: That I don't know. I do think that one of the things that's changed about it is the reaction that you get out there from the people. As you said earlier, the people are disgusted with the politics of late. They don't even pay much attention to the Clinton affair. Oh, well. We didn't pull that kind of stuff years ago.

Ms. Boswell: So there's a different ethical standard?

Mr. Mardesich: You bet it is. In my book, it is.

As I say, I know so few people down there now that it's hard for me to really say too much about how they are and what they do.

Ms. Boswell: You mentioned the impact on your family. Can you talk a little more about that—not only specifically about some of the charges against you, but also just generally the life of a politician. You were not home a lot—and certainly if they were in Everett and you were down in Olympia, you didn't see them very much.

Mr. Mardesich: You just spent all kinds of time on the job, let's face it. All week—in the first part of the session we got off on Friday night or Friday afternoon, and came back Monday morning. But on the latter part of session, it was straight through Saturday and Sunday until the end of it.

And then I was off fishing—mainly in Alaska:

August, September, into October sometimes you know. Sometimes I took some of my family with me. Several of my kids came along and worked as crew members on the boats.

Ms. Boswell: What about politics—did any of your kids develop an interest in politics?

Mr. Mardesich: Not a one! Not a one! Except to help out on my campaigns.

Ms. Boswell: What about your wife? What is the role of a spouse in a legislative career? Was she active? Were there organizations for spouses?

Mr. Mardesich: Oh, no, these girls used to get together once in a while. They used to have their parties or teas and all that sort of thing—bridge clubs. My wife didn't come down that often during a session, once in a while.

She used to campaign some, whenever she had a chance. But we had six kids; we had a full house. She had enough to do.

I didn't do as much as I should have in terms of campaigning. I didn't do one-tenth of what I should have. But it didn't bother me. So I lost, I didn't care.

I think the average guy down there today—and this is a lot of assumption—does not have the same background or attitude that the average guy in those days did who was in the Legislature. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong.

Ms. Boswell: When you say that, you don't think that they're as committed or skilled? How is their background different?

Mr. Mardesich: I don't know whether their background is different, but I think that today, from what little I see, every time you pick up the paper there's somebody doing something because somebody has talked about it. You didn't have that as much in my day. It seems to be much more reactive than proactive. In the old days it was undoubtedly there. If it was about me, I didn't let it bother me. It bothered me because it bothered the family on occasion. And then that indictment business, I figured, "What the hell, I've done nothing wrong and I could care less. Let them do it." Then when I got the bill, then I got mad about it.

Ms. Boswell: So you really weren't bitter about the things that happened?

Mr. Mardesich: No. That's not to say I wouldn't have shot one or two people if I knew I could get away with it.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think looking back that you did things you shouldn't have done?

Mr. Mardesich: People give contributions all the time. They said, "They were paying Augie off." What the hell? If they were paying me off, then they were paying everybody off! I got all kinds of funds from people who I had not done anything for. I got all kinds of contributions from people in Everett that I didn't know from Adam. Some of them were pretty healthy contributions and a lot of little ones, just from people.

Ms. Boswell: Did you see any real corruption in government when you were a member?

Mr. Mardesich: No, I never did. I suppose there was some. There had to be, I guess. When you speak of corruption, you get the implication of the money changing hands stuff, but I saw all kinds of deals being made, which is not the same type of thing that you're talking about.

Ms. Boswell: When you say deals, what do you mean?

Mr. Mardesich: "You vote for this and we'll take care that your people had jobs." Because I had my fishing job, I didn't have to worry about that issue coming up. I've got to believe that meant a lot. Some people must have got jobs and got benefits, because they were doing what some of their clients wanted them to, not what the voters wanted.

Ms. Boswell: Do you think we worry too much about ethics and deals in politics?

Mr. Mardesich: I think there's enough of that and

I think people worry about it, but I don't think that there's as much of it that they are really sick and tired of it. They see deals being made every time you turn around.

Ms. Boswell: Did you have a political philosophy? Did most legislators have political principles they tried to follow?

Mr. Mardesich: As far as a political philosophy, I don't think so—at least I didn't. Mine was, "Here's the way I feel; here's what I think is right." Some people have probably got a course to follow and follow it whether they like it or not, but I never had that problem. It was an easy thing for me to decide. If I liked the bill, I voted for it and if I didn't, I voted against it.

Ms. Boswell: What would you say to someone who's considering a political career? What would you tell them about it as a career?

Mr. Mardesich: I would take out these cards I have in my pocket and thumb through them, and say, "Here's a psychologist. You should go talk to him."

Ms. Boswell: Be truthful.

Mr. Mardesich: Well, I'll tell you one thing. I do have the feeling that you can catch hell in politics a lot more than you used to. And for a lot of times for very little reason. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm reading it wrong, but you can catch hell in the racket, no question about it. Although, as I say, it never got to me, that it affected me that deeply. If people want it or if they don't; if they think I'm doing the right job, fine. If they don't, they can move me out. Then with the help of the firemen, they did.

Ms. Boswell: When you were out of public office, did you have any regrets? Did you think about going back?

Mr. Mardesich: No, not particularly. I was out and even the fellow that they ran against me, Larry Vognild, I got to know quite well. He was always very friendly. I don't have any great regrets, great feelings, bad feelings, even too good feelings. I just did it. And I met some nice guys. Hell of a lot of nice guys in the Legislature.

Ms. Boswell: How do we attract good people to the Legislature? If we want good people to be in the position, people who will read the bills and really work like you did?

Mr. Mardesich: They're giving them a little more pay now, which has got to be part of the answer. Even that's not of great significance. For the time you spend there, it's not too bad because they have the sessions fairly limited now.

But it's every year and that can be a difficult situation if you're in a law office or something like that, and don't have partners in the law office—who handles it? Who does the work when you're not there? It's very difficult for a man who is in a law practice as a single practitioner, in my opinion at least. I never had that experience, but I could see where it would be extremely difficult for him. How does he do it? He has a secretary there and he may have to have someone come in and help take care of his stuff when he's gone, but it's not like you're doing it yourself. Not only that the results might be different, but the fact that they're doing it, and then you come back and see what they did and just shake your head.

Ms. Boswell: You mean people who are filling in for you when you're gone?

Mr. Mardesich: Yeah. It's a mystery to me how the hell you can do it, a one-man law firm. I don't know to this day how you do it. How do you do it?

Ms. Boswell: So it's either a year-round job, or else it's just the people who have more flexible careers?

Mr. Mardesich: Or if you're in a law firm with thirty people in it, someone else just does the job. And you're filling in the background with the work you do. When you're in a larger law firm like that, it is quite different from being on your own. If it's a twenty-man law firm, you must be close to at least ten of them and you can talk about the issues. You kick it around

and all that. It's different when you're on your own.

Ms. Boswell: You're mentioning law practices a lot. Do you think that a legal background is really important?

Mr. Mardesich: I think it's good. But I don't think it's necessary by a hell of a long shot. It's good in that if someone brings up an issue, a lawyer can jump to the basics of it real quickly. But so far as one way or the other, I don't know.

Ms. Boswell: Can anybody who's a thinking, caring person be a legislator?

Mr. Mardesich: Why sure, and would be a good legislator, too. You bet. Outside of the fact, as I say, they probably need some psychiatric help or they wouldn't be interested.

Ms. Boswell: You're a man who likes the last word I think, so I just want to give you the opportunity for any sort of parting words or advice, or anything you'd like to say about your career or about your life.

Mr. Mardesich: You know as much about my life as I know.

Ms. Boswell: Thank you very much.

INDEX